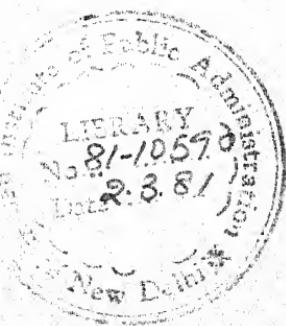


Shivaji and Swarajya

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Maharashtra Regional Branch
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Shivaji and Swarajya

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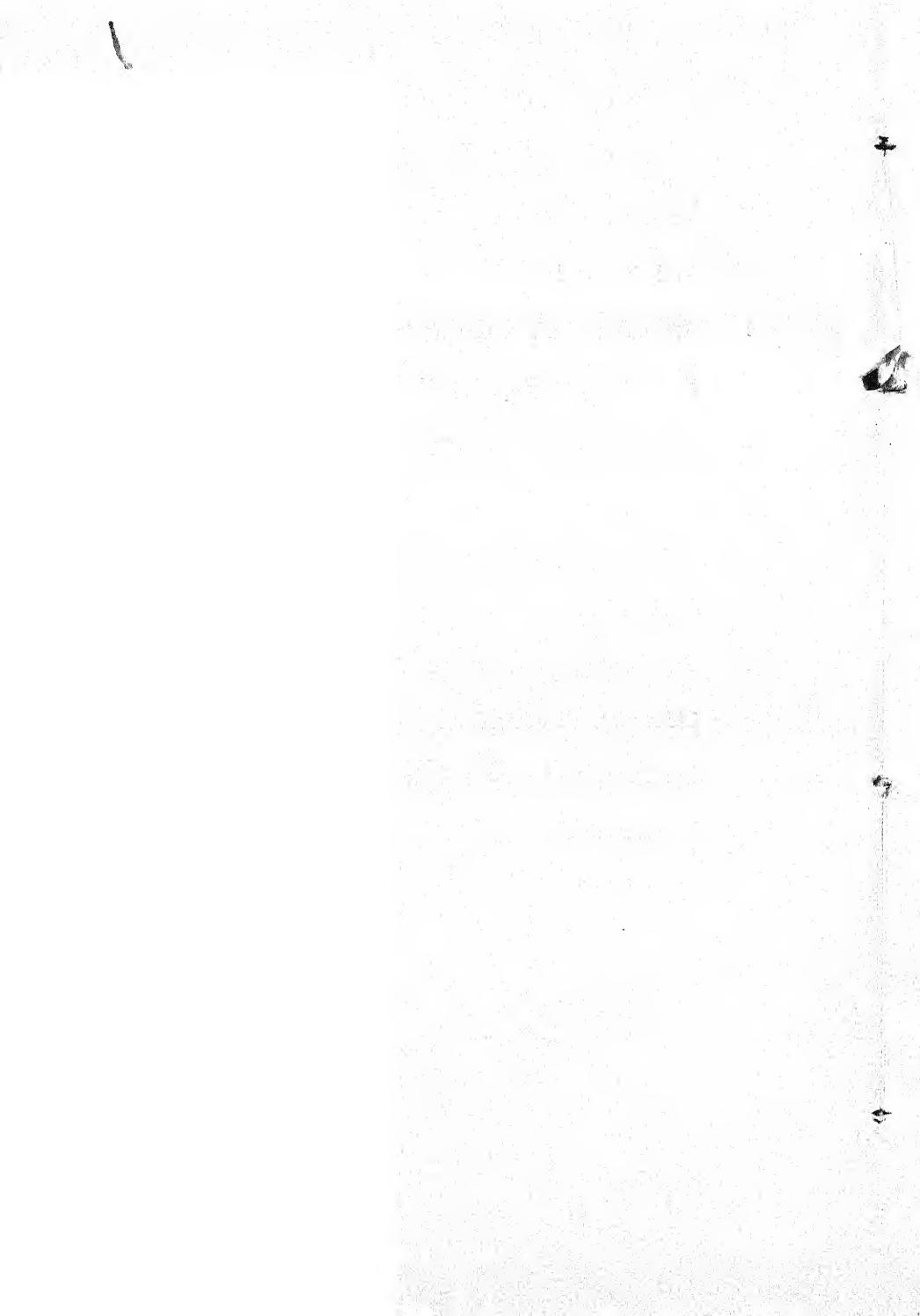
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Preface

In the annals of history we come across a few outstanding men and women whose life and work stand out as beacons to succeeding generations, summoning them to endeavour and achievement. One such person is Chhatrapati Shivaji, to whose memory a grateful nation paid reverential homage on the occasion of the tercentenary of his coronation. Though the times in which he lived were vastly different from our own, the values of personal integrity, patriotism, religious tolerance and public welfare which he cherished and promoted are very much valid even today. Public administrators have especially much to learn from this noble ruler of men, whom his guru Ramdas aptly described as “the high mountain of determination, the support of many people, unflinching in his ideals and rich in asceticism” :

निश्चयाचा महामेळ । बहुतजनांसी आधार ।
अखंड स्थितीचा निर्धार । श्रीमंत योगी ॥

Deeply rooted in the glorious traditions of India's ancient past, Shivaji was nevertheless innovative, pragmatic and even modern in his outlook and in his plans. He borrowed his administrative ideas from the ancient Indian writers on polity as well as from the contemporary practitioners of the art of government. But his practical statesmanship and constructive genius lay in the manner in which he successfully blended tradition with modernity and devised a novel system of administration suited to his times and his people. In this system the pivot was the king himself who ruled as well as reigned. He was the supreme executive, the supreme law maker and even the supreme judge. Being all in all, the ancient Indian aphorism that the king is the moulder of his age (राजा कालस्य कारणम्) fitted him like a glove. At the same time, he was a great upholder of Dharma in the most noble sense of that expression; and the weal of the common people, irrespective of caste, creed or religion, was the mainspring of all his actions. He threw careers open to talent and held his umbrella of protection and patronage over all his subjects alike. In an age of bigotry and ruthlessness Shivaji radiated tolerance and compassion; and even today, after three

centuries, we are struck by the width of his outlook and the breadth of his vision. Jadunath Sarkar rightly described him as "the greatest constructive genius of medieval India" and says that the memory of men like him remains "an imperishable historical legacy for the entire human race to animate the heart, to kindle the imagination and to inspire the brain of succeeding ages to highest endeavours".

As a part of the Coronation Tercentenary celebrations, the Maharashtra Regional Branch of the Indian Institute of Public Administration organised a series of lectures dealing with various facts of the many-splendoured achievements of Shivaji. These lectures, which were delivered by well-known scholars, attracted large audiences and were extremely well received. A suggestion was made to us that the lectures should be published in the form of a book so that a wider readership could benefit from it. We readily agreed; and the outcome is this slim volume which we are now placing in the hands of our readers.

Appropriately, these lectures commence with a masterly survey of the life and times of Shivaji by Shri Setu Madhava Rao Pagadi, whose biography of the Chhatrapati released at Raigad on the tercentenary of the Coronation is a very valuable and a most recent contribution to the literature on the subject. Describing Shivaji's career as "an extraordinary story of expanding visions", Shri Pagadi observes : "It was not as if he saw a vision in early childhood and then struggled for its attainment throughout his life. I believe that as he took one step, the next step became clear to him, and so he progressed, defeating the Jagirdars, securing the forts, annexing the Adilshahi territories, raiding the Mughal provinces and finally proclaiming himself Chhatrapati.... The seed which he planted in the soil of Maharashtra eventually grew into a huge banyan tree with branches sprawling far and wide; and within less than a century the Maratha influence was felt throughout the length and breadth of this vast country".

Next in this series is a lucid paper by Shri J. V. Naik of the Department of History, University of Bombay. Shri Naik expounds the idea that "the foundation of Swarajya was a com-

posite movement caused by the interaction of various forces which had long been at work in Maharashtra. But it was left to the supreme genius of Shivaji to canalize all the available forces into one patriotic current and to establish an independent Maratha nation-State". Of special interest is the section in which Shri Naik explains what Shivaji owed to his father Shahaji in the establishment of Swarajya.

Shri S. R. Tikekar, well-known journalist and historian, narrates the story and significance of Shivaji's Coronation which was performed "in full accordance with similar ceremonies as described in the *Ramayana* or the *Mahabharat*". It symbolised "an act of deliverance, bringing great hope and cheer", and Tikekar compliments both Gaga Bhatt and Shivaji for this epoch-making event.

Dr. C. M. Kulkarni, who heads the Department of History at the University of Bombay, has contributed an erudite paper on the ideals and institutions of Swarajya. Describing Shivaji as "an untiring carrier-forward of the torch of the immortal values and traditions of our ancient heritage", Dr. Kulkarni explains how the Swarajya was "the dharmarajya well organised with saptanga, all the seven limbs functioning efficiently and harmoniously towards the realisation of the ideal of the maximum welfare of the subjects".

The concluding lecture by Dr. M. S. Agaskar deals with the place of Swarajya in Indian History. After delineating the cardinal principles of the new social and political order established by Shivaji, Dr. Agaskar observes that the departure from these principles in later Maratha history "broke up its organised unity and ultimately led to its dismemberment and dissolution".

We owe a deep debt of gratitude to our learned guest-speakers for the time and talent bestowed by them on these lectures. The brunt of the responsibility for the organisation of the lectures fell on Shri D. K. Kulkarni, Research Officer, of the Maharashtra Regional Branch of the Indian Institute of Public Administration. I would like to place on record the gratitude of the Institute to Shri Kulkarni and my deep appreciation of his excellent

performance. We are also beholden to the Government of Maharashtra for readily coming to our help with a grant of Rs. 3,000/- towards the expenses of publication of this book. Last, but not the least, our thanks are due to M/s. Orient Longman for the elegance of this publication and for the promptitude with which it was produced. Our own efforts we shall consider amply rewarded, if students, teachers and general readers find this book interesting and useful.

V. Subramanian

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The Life and Times of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj

SETU MADHAVA RAO PAGADI

I

There are a number of people in our country who have mental reservations about the importance of the study of Shivaji and the Marathas for a general student of Indian history. There is indeed a school of thought which takes a dim view of Shivaji's achievements in an all-India context. He is looked upon as the leader of a particular community and of a small region. Like Rana Pratap he is credited with heroism and gallantry; but it is urged that he was going against the main current of Indian history which was in favour of the hegemony of a single central power controlling the destinies of the country from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin. While Ashoka, Akbar and Aurangzeb (and later the British) strove to establish an Indian empire, Shivaji, it is said, attempted to reverse that tide. But Shivaji initiated a movement, and to appreciate the wide ramifications of that movement, we must view the Maratha period of Indian history as a whole.

In the 17th century, the Mughal empire covered a major portion of India from the province of Kabul in the north to Trichinopoly in the south; from Gujarat in the west to the very outskirts of Assam in the east. The writ of the Mughal emperor ran in every part of the country. But in 1719, within twelve years of the mighty Aurangzeb's death, the Maratha militia entered Delhi and marched in the main thoroughfares of the Mughal capital. By 1740 the Marathas held sway over Malwa and Bundelkhand; in 1751 they overran Orissa and levied chauth on Bengal and Bihar; in 1757 they captured Ahmedabad, the capital of Gujarat, and in 1758 we find them subjugating the Punjab and planting the Maratha banner on the fort of Attock. The stories of the successive triumphs of Maratha arms read like romantic tales from the *Arabian Nights*; but they are nevertheless true. The Marathas took upon

themselves the responsibility of fighting the foreign foes. They liberated North Konkan from the occupation of the Portuguese, and laid down their lives on the battle-field of Panipat to drive out the raiders from Afghanistan. In 1784 the Mughal Emperor himself came under the protection of Mahadaji Shinde, and from 1784 to 1803 the Maratha flag fluttered proudly on the ramparts of Delhi's Red Fort. As Forrest observes, it was only with the battle of Assai in 1803 that the supremacy over India passed to the British. If Shivaji had not been born, and if the Maratha revolution had not swept away the debris of the Mughal empire in the 18th century, the course of Indian history would probably have run on different and disastrous lines. The European traders would perhaps have parcelled out portions of India among themselves a hundred years earlier.

It was Shivaji who gave the Marathas supreme self-confidence and inspired successive generations to deeds of courage and valour. Yet he has been the victim of much misinformed and biased writing. He has been described as a petty chieftain and a rebel against the established order, and also as a champion of Hindu India, bitterly anti-Muslim. It is therefore necessary that we should clear these misunderstandings and arrive at a proper estimate of Shivaji's role in Indian history.

The number of books written on Napoleon in all languages together runs into several thousands. As against this, I could count only 46 biographies of Shivaji. Amongst the biographies in English are those written by Chintamanrao Vaidya, Jadunath Sarkar, Bal Krishna, H. G. Rawlinson, Dennis Kincaid, V. B. Kulkarni and D. F. Karaka. In Marathi we have the works of G. S. Sardesai, K. A. Keluskar, V. K. Bhave, D. V. Kale, B. M. Purandare, T. S. Shejwalkar and V. S. Bendre. There is still scope for further research and for bringing out a comprehensive biography of Shivaji, as a considerable amount of contemporary source material is now available for that purpose in the Marathi, Sanskrit, Hindi, Persian, English, Portuguese, French and Dutch languages.

In Marathi we have the Bakhar literature. An outstanding specimen of it is the *Sabhasad Bakhar*, written by Krishnaji Anant Sabhasad within about 15 years of Shivaji's death. The *91-Qalmi Bakhar* and the *Chitnis Bakhar*, however, are later works. The

family of Kanhoji Jedhe has left behind the *Jedhe Karina* and the *Shakavali*, which is a chronology of events of Shivaji's times written by his contemporaries.

Shivaji's court poet Paramanand wrote a biography of his patron and master in Sanskrit, entitled *Shivabharat*. It yields considerable material of rich historical value. Jayaram Pindye's *Parnala Paryata Grahanakhyanam* which gives an account of the capture of Panhala by Shivaji in 1673 and another work, *Shivaraja Rajabhisheka Kalpataru*, which describes the coronation of Shivaji, are two other contemporary works in Sanskrit which deserve our study. The *Raja Vyavahara Kosh*, or the Deccani-Sanskrit glossary of administrative terms compiled by Raghunath Pant at the instance of Shivaji, throws light on the civil and military establishments of Shivaji.

The Jaipur State Archives have yielded valuable source material about Shivaji's visit to Agra in the form of letters written by Rajput Officers in the Dingal dialect, which is the Rajasthani variety of Hindi. These letters, which have been edited by Prof. Jadunath Sarkar and Dr. Raghbir Singh, faithfully report the day-to-day news from the imperial capital during the period that Shivaji was incarcerated there.

In comparison with any other language, the wealth of source material available in Persian for a study of Shivaji's times is indeed vast; and any student of Maratha history would be well-advised to learn Persian in sheer self-interest. Among the works compiled by Shivaji's contemporaries at the Court of Ali Adilshah of Bijapur are Nurulla's *Tarikh-i-Ali* and Nusrati's *Alinama* which give an account (the latter in Deccani Hindi or Urdu) of the various battles fought by Shivaji. Muhammad Kazim, the official biographer of Emperor Aurangzeb, has written a book of 1500 pages entitled *Alamgir-nama*, in which he has given a detailed history of the first ten years of Aurangzeb's reign. But the draft of the book had to be submitted for approval to the Emperor, who read every line of it. Consequently, all those episodes which ended in disgrace to the Mughals have either been conveniently left out of the description or considerably underplayed in this book. The sack of Surat has not been mentioned at all and the Shaista Khan campaign has been dismissed in three words—'Mamla na bast'. Muhammad Kazim tells us that Shaista Khan's campaign against

Shivaji did not quite succeed; hence Aurangzeb decided to send Mirza Raja Jai Singh in his place. And that is about all !

An important history in Persian is Saqi Mustaid Khan's *Masir-i-Alamgiri* which was completed within a year of Aurangzeb's death. Bhimsen Saksena's *Tarikh-i-Dilkusha* and Khafi Khan's *Muntakhab-ul-Lubab* are also valuable works, as the authors lived in the Deccan during Aurangzeb's times. Some allowance has, of course, to be made for the anti-Shivaji bias of writers like Muhammad Kazim, Saqi Mustaid Khan and Khafi Khan just as we must take cognisance of the fact that the authors of contemporary Marathi and Sanskrit works were dazzled by the achievements of Shivaji and credit him with supernatural powers and feats.

Another important source of information in Persian is the *Akhbarat* or court newsletters which are available in a copious stream, and have fortunately been preserved at Bikaner in the Jaipur State Archives. We also have several important letters written by historical personages. About 200 letters issued from Shivaji's Secretariat have been found, and nearly 50 of them, which carry the legend 'Ajrakhtkhane Shivaji Raje', were written prior to his coronation.

A mass of English records is available in the archives of the Bombay Secretariat, which has about 12 lakh files covering the history of the last 300 years. You can find there the minutes of meetings held at Bombay Castle which throw a flood of light on contemporary events. Thus we come to know that in 1678 Shivaji threatened to burn the ships of the Siddi at Mazgaon; and the British were faced with the problem of what their attitude should be. The Home and Political Department files containing the correspondence of the British with the Marathas have also since been duly catalogued and published in three volumes edited by Dr. V. G. Dighe and Dr. P. M. Joshi.

Several European travellers have left accounts of the Maratha country during Shivaji's time. By far the most interesting among them is *Storia do Mogor*, which is the autobiography of an Italian named Niccolao Manucci, who came to Surat around 1656 and died in this country in about 1717. He was in the employ of Mirza Raja Jai Singh during the latter's expedition against Shivaji. His book contains a picture of Shivaji drawn by Mir Muhammad who was an employee of the Mughal Prince Muazzam. William

Irvine has translated Manucci's voluminous work into English.

The Portuguese records of Shivaji's time are also useful for an understanding of his military, naval and diplomatic activities. Prof. Panduranga Pissurlencar has done considerable research into these papers and brought out a scholarly work on the relations between the Portuguese and the Marathas.

Further, we have the contemporary records of the Dutch, which were removed to Amsterdam and lay there for two centuries until they came to the notice of scholars. It is to the Dutch that we owe one of the most authentic portraits of Shivaji. The papers were sent to Holland; the picture was etched out and sent to England where Orme noticed it. The Dutch records have also been helpful for fixing certain dates. To give an instance, the Dutch had a factory at Hyderabad, and one of the clerks in their factory, while closing his account for the day on the 4th March 1677, recorded in the ledger book : 'Today Shivaji met Qutb Shah in Dad Mahal'. A rich heritage of documents and other source material in various languages is thus available for a detailed study of Shivaji's life and times.

Let us now consider the situation in Maharashtra before Shivaji's birth. The sixteenth century was a period of constant instability and violent change in the Deccan. The offshoots of the Bahamani kingdom were engaged in continuous internecine strife when the armies of Emperor Akbar swooped down on Maharashtra towards the close of that century. In 1596 the Mughals annexed Berar; in August 1600 they captured the fort of Ahmednagar and in 1601 annexed Khandesh. It appeared that the Nizamshahi kingdom had come to an end; but just then Akbar had to return to the north, and died there in 1605. His son Jahangir resumed the war of conquest in the Deccan; but his forces were successfully kept at bay till 1626 by the astute Malik Ambar on behalf of Sultan Nizamshah.

It was in the course of this war that Shivaji's father Shahaji Bhonsale and other Maratha captains came into prominence as the lieutenants of Malik Ambar, who trained them in the tactics of guerilla warfare. The Marathas were waiting for such an opportunity and they readily joined the fray with their infantry and light cavalry. As Sayid Ahmed Tabatabai, an immigrant from Persia who joined the service of the Nizamshah and became

his official, mentions in his book *Burhan-i-Masir*, the Maratha bargirs were comparable to the Uzbeks in sheer bravery and endurance. They were therefore highly prized by the Sultanates of the Deccan as well as by the Mughals. Prominent among the Maratha chieftains was Lakhaji Jadhav of Sindkhed (the maternal grandfather of Shivaji), who entered the service of the Mughals in 1620 with a mansab of nearly 24,000 for himself and his dependents. In 1629, Lakhaji, his two sons and a grandson were treacherously murdered by the Nizamshah. Shahaji left the Nizamshahi service and joined the Mughals as a Mansabdar of 5000. In 1632 he rebelled against the Mughals also and seized the entire territory from Poona and Chakan to Junnar, Sangamner, Nasik and North Konkan. He set up a puppet Nizamshah with headquarters at Fort Mahuli and started raiding the Mughal territories as far as Daulatabad. He told the Adilshah that he would function as a buffer state between the Bijapuris and the Mughals, and thereby protect the former. Eventually Emperor Shah Jahan himself marched into the Deccan in 1635 and closed in on Shahaji with the cooperation of the Sultans of Bijapur and Golkonda under threat of their complete extinction. Shahaji was thus compelled to leave Maharashtra and to build up a new barony in Karnataka as a servant of Bijapur. He, however, managed to retain his jagir of Poona, which he gave to his minor son Shivaji under the loving care of his mother Jijabai and teacher Dadaji Kondadev.

We thus find that after the death of Malik Ambar, Shahaji followed in his footsteps and became the kingmaker of the Nizamshahi. He knew the weakness of the Mughals; and, single-handed, he fought a running battle with them for four years from 1632 to 1636. This developed in him a confidence that he could stand up to the imperialist power in overt war as well as in covert diplomacy in spite of his limited resources in money and manpower. Apparently, he transmitted this confidence to his son Shivaji who must have been inspired by the exploits of his father. It is, in fact, suggested that a 'take-off stage' was already reached when Shivaji took charge of his jagir at Poona with its surrounding Maval territory radiating a fierce air of freedom. But there was an essential difference between the father and the son. The utmost ambition of Shahaji was to become a regent and a kingmaker; it was left to Shivaji to take the further mental jump and to aspire

to become king himself.

A theory has often been expressed that the saints and poets of Maharashtra between the 13th and the 17th centuries created an awakening among the people and roused them to social and political consciousness. It is suggested that they made the people acutely alive to the inequities of the Muhammadan rule and to the jeopardy into which the Hindu religion was thrown by that rule. The conclusion drawn is that the ground was thus prepared by these saints for the founding of an independent State by Shivaji in defence of the Hindu religion. Let us see how far this contention is correct. It is true that in the wake of the Muslim conquerors, a number of Sufis, Pirs and Fakirs came to the Deccan and they took advantage of royal patronage to promote their proselytising activities, generally in a peaceful manner, but at times resorting to even violent and iconoclastic methods. During the same period Maharashtra also produced a galaxy of Hindu saints like Dnyaneshwar, Namdev, Eknath, Janabai, Gora Kumbhar, Sanvata Mali, Sena Nhavi, Kanhopatra, Chokhamela, Janardan Swami, Tukaram and Ramdas. These saints belonging to different castes toughened the moral fibre of the Hindus and impressed upon them the need to adhere to the faith of their forefathers. Apart from this, they made no effective contribution to the rousing of social and political consciousness among the people. With the solitary exception of Ramdas, who has written about the famine and the consequent degeneration of the people in 17th century Maharashtra, these saints do not appear to show any deep insight into the social and political problems of the time. In any case, we do not find them invoking the populace to rise in rebellion against the government of the day. It was Shivaji who created a political consciousness among his people, and if he was successful in the founding of Maratha freedom, it was solely by the force of his arms, and not through the prayers of saints.

It is said that when Shivaji came on the scene, the urge for independence was already there in Maharashtra, and as he lighted the torch of freedom in the Sahyadris, the Marathas readily rallied round his banner. Even this is not completely true. The leaders of Maratha society at that time were the feudal lords—the Jadhavs of Sindkhed, the Nimbalkars of Phaltan, the Desais of Sawantwadi, the Mores of Jayli, the Ghorpades of Mudhol,

the Surves of Shringarpur and others. Some of them had borne the title of Raja for generations, but none of them was in sympathy with the movement initiated by Shivaji, and none of them shared his great vision. The Jadhavs of Sindkhed took pride in serving the Imperial Mughals. The records of the Phaltan dynasty of Nimbalkars hardly give any instance of their having fought on the side of Shivaji. The story of the Desais of Sawantwadi is even worse. They sided with the Bijapur Sultanate against Shivaji, and even went to the length of seeking refuge with the Portuguese to save themselves from retribution at Shivaji's hands.

Chandraraao More, who claimed his descent from Chandragupta Maurya, was a loyal vassal of the Adilshah of Bijapur and openly opposed Shivaji. When Shivaji called upon him to follow his lead, Chandraraao More wrote :

तुम्ही काल राजे जाहला ! तुम्हास राज्य कोण्ही दिघले ? मुस्तफद राजा आपले घरीं म्हटलियावर कोण मानितो ? तुम्ही लिहिले की जावळीत येऊ ! येता जावळी, जातां गोवळी ! पुढे एक मनुष्य जिवंत भाघारा जाणारा नाही ! तुम्हांमध्ये पुरुषार्थ असला, तर उद्दीक येणार ते आजच या ! आम्ही कोणक्ये राजे असून, आमचा राजा श्री महाबळेश्वर ! त्याचे कृपेने राज्य करितो. आम्हांस श्रीचे कृपेने बादशाहाने राजे किताब, मोरचेल, सिंहासन मेहरबान होऊन दिघले. आम्ही दाईमदारी दरपिढी राज्य जावळीचे करितो जावळीस येणारच तरी यावे ! दाखलोली महसूद आहे !

(Overnight you have become a Raja ! Who made you Raja ? An upstart may call himself Raja in his own house, but who will listen to him ? You threaten to come to Javli. If there is any manliness in you, come today instead of tomorrow. Not a man will go back alive. We are the rulers of Konkan by the grace of our Lord, Shri Mahabaleshwar. The Sultan of Bijapur has been pleased to bestow on us the title of Raja and related insignia of kingship. We have been ruling over Javli for generations. Come to Javli by all means. Our ammunition is in readiness to welcome you.)

The elite of the Maratha society thus spurned Shivaji's lead and even opposed him actively. The Deshmukhs and the Deshpandes of the countryside also had a vested interest in the established order and therefore constituted a hindrance to any change. They spent most of their time in mutual blood feuds and in plunder and rapine for the sake of watans. The general run of the people were apathetic, and the village communities followed their own routine

without much interference from the rulers. Revolutions can come about either through acute economic disaster or through high political consciousness; neither of these factors was present in 17th century Maharashtra. The economic situation was bad enough; but it was no worse than in other parts of the country. When people met in the shrine of Vithoba at Pandharpur, they might have talked of religious persecution by the rulers, or of the reduced condition of the peasantry; but it cannot be said that they had become politically conscious, or that the ground was ready for rebellion against the established order. In these circumstances, it was indeed an uphill task for Shivaji to organise the turbulent Mavlas, or even to retain their loyalty over a period of time in the larger cause of Maratha freedom. Yet he produced heroes out of ordinary men, and that is his greatness. Tanaji Malusare, Yesaji Kank, Jiva Mahala, Moropant Pingle, Prataprao Gujar —these were all unknown persons; but with the magic touch of Shivaji they could withstand the mighty Mughals. They performed feats of uncommon endeavour and attained immortality.

II

When did the urge to found an independent kingdom come to Shivaji? There is a school of historians in Maharashtra who consider that Shivaji conceived his dream of an independent State or Hindavi Swarajya as early as in 1645, when he was about 15 years old. This view is based on a certain letter dated 16th May 1645, in which Shivaji is supposed to have written to Dadaji Narasprabhu Deshpande as follows :

श्री रोहिरेश्वर तुमचे खोरियातील आदि कुलदेव तुमचा डोंगरमाथा पठारावर शोद्रीलगत स्वयंभू आहे. त्याणी आम्हास यश दिल्हे व पुढे तो सर्व मनोरथ हिंदवी स्वराज्य करून पुरविणार आहे

राजश्री श्री दादापांताचें विद्यमाने बाबाचे व तुमचे व आमचे श्रीपासी इमान जाले ते कायम वज्प्राय आहे. त्यांत अंतर आम्ही व आमचे वंशज लेकराचे वतन वर्गे चालविष्णाविसी करणार नाही.

(Shri Rohiresvar, the divine master of your valley, has given us success and He will satisfy all our desires by enabling us to establish *Hindavi Swarajya*. I and my successors shall on no account violate the sacred promise made to you, witnessed by Dadajipant in the divine presence of Shri Rohiresvar.)

The story goes thus : that Shivaji led a band of devoted followers to the temple of Rohiresvar where they all took an oath to establish Hindavi Swarajya. The authenticity of this letter has, however, been questioned by several eminent scholars, who consider that its language is not the language of the 17th century.

Rajwade wrote that the contents of the letter might be true. D. V. Apte says : हों पत्रे भाषेच्या दृष्टीने तरी विश्वसनीय नाहीत असे निश्चयाने म्हणता येते. तथापि त्यातला भतलब खरा असेल असे कै. राजवाडे याचे म्हणणे होते. (From a philological point of view at any rate, these letters can definitely be said to be unreliable; but the late Shri Rajwade was of the view that their contents might be true). T. S. Shejwalkar says : हे पत्र तितकेसे विश्वसनीय नाही. (The letter is not so reliable).

One difficulty in going through the source material available on the life of Shivaji is that a large number of spurious documents are also in circulation. These documents were contributed by various families in Maharashtra only in the 19th century when they were submitted by them to the Inam Commission just to show how close to Shivaji their ancestors were and what great exploits they had performed. Similarly, a number of documents produced by the families of Watandar Deshmukhs and Deshpandes in the course of mid-19th century civil litigations have also been found to be of a doubtful nature. The letter of 1645, in which the words हिंदवी स्वराज्य occur, is also probably unauthentic, as its language is distinctly modern and far too polished to belong to the 17th century. There is also no other evidence to show that Shivaji dreamt of an independent State in the year 1645. The story of oath-taking in the temple of Rohiresvar, romantic as it is, has therefore to be disbelieved.

Even if the letter is considered authentic, there is another aspect of the matter which must be taken into account. Words undergo a change of meaning with succeeding generations and a historical dictionary of a language is really necessary. When Shivaji spoke of Swarajya in 1645, he may not necessarily have meant an independent State. He was perhaps referring only to securing a free control over his jagir at Poona. To Brahme of Chakan he wrote : स्वामीच्या अनुग्रहाने राज्यास पात्र झालो. (Because of your grace, I became entitled to this rajya). Here also Shivaji refers to his jagir when he speaks of the rajya. We should not

import 20th century meanings into 17th century words. To give you an instance, the word 'फटकळ' in Marathi today refers to a thoughtless speaker; but when Shivaji said फटकळ घोडे कामाचे नाहीत, he was referring to sub-standard horses and obviously not to horses indulging in thoughtless speech ! Similarly, even if Shivaji mentioned हिंदवी स्वराज्य or राज्याचे अधिकारी in 1645 or 1648 it does not necessarily mean that he was contemplating the establishment of an independent State.

I look upon Shivaji's life and career as an extraordinary story of expanding visions. It was not as if he saw a vision in early childhood and then struggled for its attainment throughout his life. I believe that as he took one step, the next step became clear to him, and so he progressed, defeating the Jagirdars, securing the forts, annexing the Adilshahi territories, raiding the Mughal provinces and finally proclaiming himself Chhatrapati. The decision to have an independent State, implemented in 1674, could not have occurred to Shivaji in 1645 when he was barely 15 years old.

Indeed, great movements often start with small incidents. In 1643, the Adilshah of Bijapur was annoyed with Shahaji and gave orders that his Poona jagir should be ravaged. When the Bijapur forces came, Shivaji had no place where he could move his family. In those days, while the villages were given to the Jagirdar, the forts were controlled by the Central Administration. The town of Poona and the villages of Maval region were with Shivaji; but the forts of Sinhgad, Torna, Lohgad, etc., were in charge of Adilshahi nominees. It therefore struck Shivaji that it was essential to have forts in which he could take shelter in times of danger. From that time, the conquest of forts became a passion with him.

Novelists have been eloquent in telling us that Torna was the first fort conquered by Shivaji. Hari Narayan Apte has given a thrilling account of this episode in his novel 'उषळाळ' (*Ushakal*). But no such event as described by him, ever occurred. For example, the novelist tells us that the Mavla soldiers hid their weapons in blankets and passed through seven gates. Prof. N. R. Phatak, whose family belongs to a village at the foot of this fort, told Haribhau that there was only one gate to the fort and not seven as mentioned by him. Haribhau then confessed that he had never been to Torna !

On 7th March 1647, Dadaji Kondadev died and thereafter

Shivaji launched upon his conquest of forts. First he took possession of dilapidated forts and deserted hillocks. When the Adilshah protested to Shahaji about it, the latter said that Shivaji was taking these deserted places only in order to make proper arrangements in them, and to maintain the fair name of the Bijapur Kingdom. Emboldened, Shivaji took Kondana (Sinhgad), the biggest fort in the region, by bribing the Governor of the fort, Siddi Ambar. This infuriated the Adilshah, who sent Fateh Khan and Musa Khan to attack Shivaji; but they were defeated. Shahaji, who was then at Jinji in the south, was arrested under instructions from the Adilshah and confined in prison at Bijapur. The return of Sinhgad was made a condition precedent to Shahaji's release. Shivaji was therefore forced to surrender the fort, and Shahaji was allowed to go back to Bangalore in May 1649. Thereafter Shahaji lost interest in Shivaji and Jijabai, and left them to battle on their own against adverse circumstances. He became entangled in his affairs at Bangalore, with his second wife, Tukabai and her son, Vyankoji. He told the Adilshah that Shivaji was no longer of any concern to him, and the Adilshah could do what he liked to him. Some historians have been hard put to it to establish that there was a conspiracy of silence between Shahaji and Shivaji; but there is no evidence to support such a view. Shahaji was completely loyal to the Adilshah, and he no longer took any interest in the doings of Shivaji.

By 1654 Shivaji had taken the forts of Torna, Rajgad and Purandar, and brought under effective control most of his jagir spread over Poona, Supa, Baramati, Indapur and Chakan. At this time, four-fifths of Maharashtra was controlled by the Mughals, and the question before Shivaji was whether he should now proceed northwards into the Mughal territory. But the Mughal monster was too powerful for Shivaji to tackle. Nor was it possible for him to attack the areas directly administered by the Bijapur Government. He therefore decided to attack the Hindu vassals of Bijapur so that the Adilshah would think the attack only meant that two Hindu jagirdars were fighting with each other. Accordingly Shivaji struck at Chandrarao More of Javli and completed the campaign against him within a year. The noted historian Jadunath Sarkar has observed that "the acquisition of Javli was the result of deliberate murder and organized

treachery on the part of Shivaji" ¹; but this comment appears unfair. As the letters recently edited by Avalaskar show, it was a hard and open fight which resulted in the complete liquidation of the Mores. Thereafter Shivaji built the fort of Pratapgad near Javli and extended his territories right up to Mahad, so that they touched the boundaries of the Siddi of Janjira and in the north approached the district of Kalyan.

In November 1656, Muhammad Adilshah of Bijapur died. Prince Aurangzeb, who was at that time the Mughal Viceroy of the Deccan, felt that this was an opportune time to annex the kingdom of Bijapur. He marched his armies against Bijapur and the 20 years' peace between the Mughals and the Adilshahi initiated by Shah Jahan in 1636 thus came to an end. Aurangzeb captured Bidar and Kalyani. Shivaji suddenly realised that the kingdom of Bijapur was in the process of disintegration. Siddi Jauhar had become semi-independent in Karnul, Bahlol Khan was extending his sway over Savanur and Bankapur; Rustam-i-Zaman ruled in South Konkan and Kanara. These noblemen of Bijapur had no roots in their fiefs. On the other hand, Shivaji was a son of the soil, and he started asking himself why he should not have his own State among his own people. In the meantime, the Bijapuris approached Prince Dara, the elder brother of Aurangzeb, and through his intercession a peace treaty was signed between the Mughal Emperor and the Adilshah in August 1657. Under the terms of this treaty, Bijapur surrendered to the Emperor the Nizamshahi territory earlier obtained by it under the treaty of 1636. This territory included not only Chaul, Bhivandi and Kalyan in North Konkan but also Poona, Supa, Baramati, Indapur and Chakan, which were held by Shivaji as his jagir. Shivaji had never denied his status as a Jagirdar (or Mokasdar as the term was in those days) of the Adilshahi. If he was trying to seize more territory around his jagir, it was what all the Adilshahi noblemen of his time were doing. But now Shivaji became overnight a subject of the vast Mughal Empire and the Bijapuris thought that he would meet more than his match in Aurangzeb.

As luck would have it, Emperor Shah Jahan fell ill in September 1657. This gave the signal for a war of succession among his sons, and Aurangzeb had to hurry to the north. In the meantime

1. J. N. Sarkar, *Shivaji and His Times*, Orient Longman, 1973, p. 43.

the Bijapuri Governor of Kalyan had left for Bijapur. The Mughals had not taken charge of the Kalyan Bhivandi area. In the void thus created, Shivaji swooped down with the swiftness of an eagle and seized the town of Kalyan on 24th October 1657 and Bhivandi soon thereafter. There he laid the foundations of the Maratha navy which was the first of its kind in Indian history. A good deal of information about the orders given by Shivaji for the construction of ships, the material collected, men employed, etc. is available in Portuguese sources. Shivaji also constructed a small fort at Durgadi. To Aurangzeb he must have written somewhat as follows :

Your Majesty's district of Kalyan Bhivandi is safe under me and so is the district of Poona. After all, this Empire belongs to Your Majesty and I am only an humble subject. Your Majesty may kindly be pleased to confirm me in my Jagir.

Aurangzeb must have wrung his hands in sheer helplessness. His eyes were then glued to the Imperial Throne at Delhi. Diplomatically, he wrote back to Shivaji :

We are happy to receive your offer of loyalty and shall certainly consider your petition.

But in separate letters to his officers, Nasiri Khan and Multafat Khan, he ordered :

Watch that dog Shivaji; go and devastate his territories.

In February 1658, Aurangzeb left Aurangabad for the north for a decisive battle for the throne.

One story which has gained currency in the popular mind in connection with Shivaji's raid of Kalyan relates to the capture of the young and beautiful daughter-in-law of the Governor of Kalyan by Abaji Mahadev and her presentation to Shivaji as a gift. Shivaji is said to have promptly sent back the lady to her home with all dignity and honour, saying, "If my own mother was as beautiful, I too would have been handsome." This story is a total fabrication, as there is no evidence for it in any contemporary writings. In fact, Mulla Ahmed, Governor of Kalyan, was at Bijapur along with his family from 1646 to 1656, and his son and daughter-in-law were at Bijapur at the time of Shivaji's raid of Kalyan. Surely there is no need to attribute such fantastic stories to Shivaji (and in the process make him utter uncharitable words about his own mother) to highlight his moral rectitude.

It is well known that even the contemporary Mughal historian, Khafi Khan, who was by no means an admirer of Shivaji, has written :

Shivaji was careful to maintain the honour of the women and children of Muhammadans when they fell into his hands. His injunctions upon this point were very strict and anyone who disobeyed them received punishment.

In April 1659, the Bijapur Government sent Afzal Khan to arrest or kill Shivaji. An eloquent account of his campaign has been given by the poet Paramanand in his Sanskrit poem *Shivabharat*, which was written during Shivaji's lifetime. According to *Shivabharat*, Afzal Khan had instructions to arrest Shivaji and to produce him before the Adilshah. But *Tarikh-i-Ali*, a contemporary Persian work of Nurulla, the Court poet of Bijapur, hints that the Adilshah's orders were that Shivaji should be destroyed "by flinging the fire of death on the harvest of his life." A Dutch dispatch from Vengurla dated 5th May 1660 also mentions that Afzal Khan had been directed by the Adilshah to kill Shivaji either in battle or by deceit, and that a very prominent nobleman from the Court of Bijapur had passed on this information to Shivaji. Perhaps the nobleman in question was Rustam-i-Zaman who was friendly to Shivaji.

The story is told that during his march to Wai, Afzal Khan broke the image of the Goddess Bhavani at Tuljapur and also the image of Vithoba at Pandharpur. One contemporary document mentions :

पंडरपुरीची विठ्ठल मूर्ति काढीली, तुळजापुरीची मूर्ति काढीली, कोल्हापुरच्ची महालक्ष्मीची मूर्ति काढीली.

Perhaps this means that the images in the various temples were removed and kept safe from molestation by the invaders (which was not an unusual practice); but the word काढीली was changed to कांडीली implying that the images were ground to pieces. In any case, even geography gives the lie to this story. Tuljapur is very much to the north of Bijapur across the river Bhima, and it is certainly not on the way from Bijapur to Wai. Afzal Khan was also accompanied by a number of Maratha chiefs such as Ghorpade, Kate, Pandhare Naik, Kharate Naik, Kalyanrao Jadhav, Zunjarrao Ghatge, and Mambaji Bhonsale.

Paramanand too has given a religious colour to the Afzal Khan episode, and described the struggle between Shivaji and Afzal Khan as a fight between the gods and the demons. While this approach may have been natural to Paramanand, as he was nurtured in the tradition of the Puranas, the modern historian must exercise his judgement and take a more rational viewpoint. The conflict between Shivaji and Afzal Khan was clearly a political issue; it was not a Hindu-Muslim conflict.

Paramanand himself tells us about the warning letter sent by Afzal Khan to Shivaji after his arrival at Wai in July 1659. In this letter Shivaji is asked to return to the Mughals the territory of Poona, Chakan, Kalyan, Bhivandi and Chaul along with its forts, to restore to the Adilshah the principality of Javli, and to surrender unconditionally. To submit to this demand would have been political suicide for Shivaji. He was also aware of the murderous designs of the Bijapuri general. In a diplomatic move he informed Afzal Khan that he was prepared to surrender, but the latter should come and meet him at Pratapgad. Shivaji's envoy Pantaji Gopinath also told Afzal Khan that Shivaji was mortally afraid of him and would not come to his camp. Afzal Khan's ego was tickled and he agreed to meet Shivaji at Pratapgad despite his counsellors' advice to the contrary. In *Tarikh-i-Ali*, Nurulla describes this incident very poetically in the following words :

Like a young husband who moves impatiently to his newly wed wife, infatuated by her beauty and love, Afzal Khan moved towards Pratapgad and towards his own death.

Both Paramanand and Sabhasad have given graphic descriptions of the Shivaji-Afzal Khan meeting on 10th November 1659. One issue which was under debate in 19th century Maharashtra was: who struck the first blow ? The *Chitnis Bakhar* gives the impression that Shivaji was almost waiting for the first blow to fall from Afzal Khan. He seems to say :

बरें जाले ! पहिला वार आपण केलात. आतां आमची भवानी तलवार पहा.

(It is good that you struck the first blow. Now meet my Bhavani sword.)

As Paramanand says, when two persons meet even God will hesitate to say what transpired between them. It is clear that

both of them were harbouring treacherous thoughts. For a burly man like Afzal Khan the temptation to strangle the puny, pigmy figure of Shivaji must indeed have been great, especially as the latter appeared to be clinging to him in sheer terror. Shivaji also could have felt that a struggle would be fatal and he may therefore have plunged his dagger into the Khan's abdomen without the least delay. As Sarkar says, it was "a case of diamond cut diamond" ², and the more alert person, namely Shivaji, won. The rest was all tragedy. Afzal Khan's head was cut off and his bodyguards were killed. The Marathas fell upon his army and about 3000 of his men were slaughtered. An immense booty was carried off and according to Sabhasad it included 4,000 horses, 65 elephants, 1,200 camels, 2,000 bundles of clothing and Rs. 7 lakhs in cash and jewellery.

This was clearly not a Hindu-Muslim conflict, as there were several Hindus in Afzal Khan's camp and several Muslims on Shivaji's side. Among the Khan's bodyguards were two full-blooded Marathas, Shankaraji and Pilaji Mohite. Shivaji's own uncle Mambaji Bhonsale was in Afzal Khan's army and was killed in the carnage. The Khan's envoy to Shivaji was also a Hindu, named Krishnaji Bhaskar. On the other hand, one of Shivaji's aides was a Muslim of the name of Ibrahim.

We learn from Paramanand that Afzal Khan was killed at about 2 p.m. on Thursday, 10th November 1659. That was a moment which was crucial to the birth of the Maratha State. So far Shivaji's steps had been hesitant, but now he gained confidence. Had he been killed in the encounter with Afzal Khan, there would perhaps have been no Maratha Period in the history of our country. We must remember this when anyone speaks of Shivaji's treachery in the Afzal Khan episode.

Shivaji followed up his victory over Afzal Khan by over-running the districts of Satara and Sangli, and capturing the fort of Panhala; but in March 1660 he was besieged at Panhala by the Bijapuri general Siddi Jauhar, who had been given the title of Salabat Khan. In the meantime the Emperor Aurangzeb had sent his uncle Shaista Khan as the viceroy of the Deccan, and he too had been approached by the Bijapur Government for help against Shivaji. On 9th May 1660, Shaista Khan entered Poona,

2. J. N. Sarkar, *op. cit.*, p. 74.

and from there he proceeded to capture the fortress of Chakan, so as to connect his camp with the line of supplies at Ahmednagar. That small fortress was, however, so ably defended by Firangoji Narsala that the Mughals, in spite of their vast superiority in numbers, took nearly two months to capture it. 268 Mughal soldiers were killed and 600 were seriously injured. Shaista Khan therefore returned to Poona, which now became the headquarters of the Mughal province of Deccan. He set up his civilian government there and started administering the surrounding territory. Shivaji was at that time under siege in the fort at Panhala. On the night of 13th July 1660 he slipped out of the fort, but was hotly pursued by the Bijapur forces. The road led through a narrow ravine which was defended against heavy odds and with conspicuous bravery by Baji Prabhu Deshpande until Shivaji safely reached the fort of Vishalgad. Baji Prabhu died in the encounter. He has been immortalised in song and ballad.

In November 1660, the Mughal forces took possession of the fort of Parenda from the Bijapuris, and in May 1661 they recaptured the district of Kalyan in North Konkan. Shivaji had earlier defeated the Mughal general Kar Talab Khan at Umbar-khind in January 1661 when the latter was trying to descend into the Konkan. He now diverted his activities to South Konkan and captured Dabhol. The English factors of Rajapur had supplied grenades to Siddi Jauhar when he was engaged in the siege of Panhala. In reprisal, Shivaji made a surprise raid on Rajapur and plundered the English factory. He carried off as prisoners the English President Revington and three other factors, whom he released only after a few years.

According to contemporary estimates, the strength of Shaista Khan's army was about a lakh of soldiers and he was camping at Poona for a full three years from 1660 to 1663. Yet after the capture of Chakan, we do not find him making any efforts to capture the many forts of the Marathas in the Poona region. As Sarkar says, perhaps the loss of nearly 900 soldiers at Chakan may have deterred him.³ Some interesting sidelights on the motivations of Mughal generals are also available in the Persian autobiography of Bhimsen Saksena, whose father was the accounts officer of the Mughal artillery at Aurangabad, and whose uncle was a clerk in

3. J. N. Sarkar, *op. cit.*, p. 82. . . .

Shaista Khan's camp at Poona. Bhimsen tells us about the levity and corruption of the Mughal camp. Shaista Khan was the brother of Emperor Aurangzeb's mother Mumtaz Mahal. His daughter Pari Begum was married to the Prime Minister Muhammad Jafar's son. The boy's mother was also a sister of Mumtaz Mahal. This marriage was celebrated with great pomp and splendour at Poona when Shaista Khan was camping there, and the festivities went on for a whole month. Bhimsen tells us that Jafar's son Namdar Khan who was at Poona asked Shaista Khan : "Uncle, why should it be difficult for us to subjugate Shivaji, who has only about 3,000 cavalry, 5,000 infantry and a few forts ? I think I could bring him to book in about three months if you would give me a force of 10,000." Shaista Khan replied: "You are still a child, Namdar Khan. If we bring the campaign against Shivaji to an end, Aurangzeb will have no enemy left throughout the length and breadth of this country. He will then set his heart on capturing the Fort of Kandahar. It is very cold there and you will have to fight against the Pathans and the Persians. Are you ready for it ?" Namdar Khan said : "That would certainly be a tough proposition." "Then don't talk of finishing Shivaji," said Shaista Khan, "Go on sending dispatches every week about the various victories won, and carry on with the present campaign. If the war against the Marathas is over, Aurangzeb will also insist on retrenching our force of 75,000 soldiers. Are you prepared to take the curses of these poor, helpless people who will lose their jobs ?" "No ! No !" said Namdar Khan, and he did not pursue his argument. Such was the corruption among the Mughal generals.

Shaista Khan started practising seduction on Shivaji's officers also. He offered them tempting monetary rewards and mansabs for deserting Shivaji and taking up service under the Mughals. After all, the resources of the Mughal Empire were vast, and Shaista Khan could afford to pay ten times the salary which Shivaji gave to his officers. For three years the seduction of Shivaji's men went on apace, and we have a sickening tale of able Maratha officers deserting him one after another. Even Sambhaji Kavji who had played a notable part in the campaign against Chandra-rao More left Shivaji and went over to the Mughals. This was a loss in terms of both brain and brawn and it deeply shocked Shivaji. He felt that a time would soon come when the only man who would be left to defend the freedom of Maharashtra would

be Shivaji alone. The sheer physical presence of over 75,000 Mughals in the Maratha territory was also a brutal fact which had to be reckoned with. Shivaji therefore made peace with the Adilshah by returning to him the fort of Panhala, and then decided on the daring plan of striking at Shaista Khan in his own camp.

At midnight on 5th April 1663, Shivaji himself led a band of selected soldiers and broke into the residence of Shaista Khan at Lal Mahal, which was the home of Shivaji's childhood in Poona. The Mughal historian Khafi Khan, whose father was a servant of Shaista Khan, has narrated the story of this event. It was the month of Ramzan, and apart from some cooks who were busy preparing the food for the next day's breakfast, most of the servants were asleep. The Marathas forced their entry by removing the bricks of a wall and made their way towards Shaista Khan's bedroom. It was pitch dark, and whoever came in the way—whether it was a soldier or a servant, male or female—was struck down by the intruders. Shaista Khan got up from his sleep and tried to throw a spear at the assailants. But he was promptly attacked and in the blow that fell his fingers were chopped off. Two of the Marathas tumbled over a fountain of water, and in the confusion that ensued, some slave-girls removed Shaista Khan to safety. The killing continued for some time, and among the casualties were Shaista Khan's son Abul Fath, six of the Khan's wives and slave-girls and forty of his attendants. Next morning everyone was aghast at the previous night's happenings. Maharaja Jaswant Singh of Jodhpur who was camping nearby came to condole with Shaista Khan; but the latter sneeringly remarked : "Are you still alive ? When the enemy attacked me, I thought you had already died fighting in defence of me!" Bhimsen Saksena tells us that rumour was indeed rife in the Mughal camp that the previous night's incidents had taken place with the connivance of Jaswant Singh.

The humiliation heaped by Shivaji on the Emperor's uncle and premier peer (amir-ul-umra) of the Mughal realm made a deep impression all over India. No feat was considered impossible for him. The fact that in an assignment so full of danger he had himself jumped into the fray in total disregard of his personal safety won the hearts of his devoted followers. They vied with each other to shed their blood where Shivaji's perspiration trickled to the ground. Utterly humiliated, Shaista Khan

retired to Aurangabad and the Emperor shortly transferred him to the province of Bengal. Prince Muazzam took over as the new Viceroy of the Deccan in January 1664.

Shivaji felt that it was now high time to visit the Mughal territories with the same kind of devastation as was inflicted by them on the homeland of the Marathas. He moved rapidly via Kalyan, Jawhar, Ramnagar and Ganadevi and suddenly arrived at Surat on 6th January 1664. Surat was then a very rich city, which yielded an annual revenue of Rs. 12 lakhs by way of imperial customs alone. This revenue was assigned to the Emperor's sister, Jahanara Begum, as her privy purse. As soon as the news of Shivaji's arrival came, Inayat Khan, the Mughal Governor of the city, fled to the local Fort, and others followed him, leaving the city defenceless. For a full four days Shivaji's men plundered the city and set fire to houses. The devastation of the Maratha territories by the Mughals was thus avenged, and Shivaji obtained a booty of over a crore of rupees. Most of this wealth was utilised by him for the construction of the naval fort of Sindhudurg near Malwan. Slowly, the western coast was covered with a string of forts like Vijayadurg, Suvarnadurg and Padmadurg and Shivaji built up his navy which acted as a check on the expansionist activities of the Siddis of Janjira, the Portuguese and the English.

In a letter of 1664 addressed to the Counsellors of the Emperor Alamgir (Aurangzeb), Shivaji refers to the Mughal attempts to conquer his homeland. He specifically mentions in this letter : "It is my duty to guard my land." This shows that the objective of Shivaji in the sack of Surat was not only to gain wealth but also to teach a lesson to the Mughals to keep their hands off Maratha territories.

In September 1664 the Emperor appointed Mirza Raja Jai Singh to vanquish Shivaji. Jai Singh arrived at Poona on 3rd March 1665 along with his deputies who included men like Dilir Khan, Daud Khan Qureshi, Raja Rai Singh Sisodia, and Raja Sujan Singh Bundela. Jai Singh was one of the greatest generals and diplomats of the 17th century. He was more than a match for Shivaji. He planned his campaign with consummate skill and combined against Shivaji all his enemies such as the Bijapuris, the Portuguese and the Maratha chieftains like Nimbalkar and More. Roving columns of Mughal armies kept the Marathas

continuously on the run, burnt their villages and captured men, women and cattle. The entire Maratha territory was thrown into disorder, and streams of refugees started moving from place to place. Dilir Khan laid siege to the fort of Purandar which put up a gallant fight under the brave Murar Baji who laid down his life after a heroic struggle and became immortal in history.

Shivaji now realised that it was futile to continue this unequal struggle, and on 11th June 1665 he walked into the camp of Jai Singh offering an unconditional surrender. The terms of a permanent peace were then negotiated and after much bargaining on both sides, the following terms were agreed upon, in what is known as the Treaty of Purandar :

- (i) That Shivaji should surrender to the Mughals 23 of his forts covering a territory with an annual revenue of 4 lakh hons (Rs. 20 lakhs).
- (ii) That Shivaji should retain with him only 12 forts (including Rajgad) with an annual revenue of 1 lakh hons (Rs. 5 lakhs).
- (iii) That Shivaji should be loyal to the imperial throne and also assist the Mughals in the campaign against Bijapur with 2,000 cavalry of his son Sambhaji's mansab and 7,000 infantry under his own command.

Some of our historians have tried to establish that Shivaji was not really defeated by Jai Singh; and that he sued for peace because Hindus were dying on both sides. Even Dr. Bal Krishna cites a long letter in Persian in which Shivaji writes to Jai Singh that both of them were Hindus and that they should come together to bring down the Alamgir from the imperial throne of Delhi. This letter is certainly a spurious document. Apparently, it is an essay by a postgraduate student of Persian from a college in Bihar, who was asked to try his hand at Persian verse on an imaginary conversation between Shivaji and Jai Singh; and it is now being cited as an authentic document to support the diplomatic victory of Shivaji !

There is no gainsaying the fact that Shivaji was totally defeated at the hands of Mirza Raja Jai Singh and the treaty of Purandar was one of the greatest disappointments in his life. His dream was shattered and on bended knees he had to accept the Emperor's

farman in September 1665. Even his letters to Aurangzeb during this time are couched in a language of abject surrender, and he refers to himself as "an offender and a sinner deserving of all kinds of punishment". To this our historians would say that Shivaji did not know Persian and he signed whatever was put up to him by Jai Singh's draftsmen !

Every human being, however great, has his ups and downs and the greatness of Shivaji does not lie in not having been defeated at any time. What is significant is that every time he had a setback, he rose up once again. Adversities did not make him bitter; they made him more broadminded. He knew how to conquer not only fear but also hatred; and therein we see his real greatness. When I review the career of Shivaji, I am deeply impressed by his high intelligence, his superb strategy, his firm determination and persistence and above all, by his unflinching faith in the goal which he had set before himself. I am equally appalled by the corruption that oozed from the Mughal Courts, and by the sheer shortsightedness of the Mughal Emperor. Aurangzeb never showed any consideration for Shivaji. The Mughals also wasted their time and resources in conquering Bijapur and Golkonda which were already on the decline. Jadunath Sarkar has mentioned a conversation between Dilir Khan and Mirza Raja Jai Singh which is significant. Dilir Khan said : "Maharaj ! Don't invade Bijapur. You have conquered Shiva, let him manage things in the Deccan and conduct our business there". But Jai Singh answered : "Bhaiji, don't you speak", to which Dilir Khan retorted, "I will not say anything more now. This campaign will end by ruining both you and me, and then I shall speak." ⁴ The Mughals had a splendid opportunity to contain the Marathas in the South by making Shivaji their general in the Deccan and permitting him to conquer Bijapur on his own. That would have enabled them to concentrate on the North. Both Elphinstone and Lane Poole have referred to this blunder on the part of the Mughals. Lane Poole observes :

Seldom was political sagacity more at fault. The rude highlander (Shivaji), who might have been converted into a powerful prop of the empire in the Deccan, was allowed to escape

4. J. N. Sarkar, *House of Shivaji*, 3rd ed., M. C. Sarkar & Sons, Calcutta, 1955, p. 163.

(from Agra) in disguise, affronted and enraged, to resume his old sway in the mountains. Too late the Emperor attempted conciliation : the old antagonist had become a personal enemy and nothing could soothe his resentment.⁵

In fact, Aurangzeb was not very happy even about the decision to allow Shivaji to retain twelve forts and a territory of Rs. 5 lakhs in the Maratha country. Jai Singh's letter of explanation reads almost like an apology. He says :

Although we could have put down Shivaji and Bijapur, yet I felt I could not drive Shivaji too hard. He had made arrangements for the defence of his territory. The Adil-shah of Bijapur had also made an offer of putting up a united front with Shivaji against the Mughals. That is why I left this territory to Shivaji.

At the instance of Jai Singh and under his solemn assurance of protection, Shivaji went to Agra to have an audience with the Emperor on 12th May 1666. In fairness, proper courtesy and even generosity should have been extended to this great warrior who had fought so gallantly. But Aurangzeb did not utter even one word of welcome or recognition when Shivaji presented to him his nazar and nisar. Khilats (robes of honour) were presented to the Royal Princes, to the Grand Vazir Jafar Khan and to Raja Jaswant Singh, but not to Shivaji, who was made to stand in ignominy behind several rows of noblemen. Shivaji felt greatly insulted.

A bunch of letters in the Dingal dialect of Rajasthan written by officers of Kumar Ram Singh (Jai Singh's son and Shivaji's caretaker at the Emperor's Court) have been discovered in the Jaipur State Archives. As mentioned earlier, these letters give a graphic eyewitness account of the happenings at Agra during these fateful days. We learn from these papers that Shivaji flew into a rage at the ignominy heaped on him and his eyes became wet. Noticing this, the Emperor told Kumar Ram Singh : "Ask Shivaji what ails him." Accordingly the Kumar approached Shivaji and the latter said : "You have seen, your father has seen, your Padishah has seen what a man I am; and yet you have deliberately made me stand up so long. I cast off your mansab. If

5. Stanley Lane-Poole, *Medieval India Under Mohammedan Rule*, T. Fisher Unwin, London, 1903, p. 392.

you wanted me to stand, you should have done so according to the right order of precedence." So saying, he proudly turned his back to the Throne and walked away. The Kumar followed him and tried to reason with him. But Shivaji said : "My destined day of death has arrived. Either you will slay me or I shall kill myself. Cut off my head if you like, but I am not going to the Emperor's presence again." Ram Singh reported the matter to the Emperor, who sent Multafat Khan, Aqil Khan and Mukhlis Khan to console Shivaji, invest him with a Khilat and lead him back to his presence. Shivaji told them : "I refuse to accept the Khilat. The Emperor has deliberately made me stand below Jaswant Singh. I am such a man and yet he has wilfully kept me standing. I decline the Emperor's mansab; I will not be his servant. Kill me, imprison me, if you like; but I won't wear the Khilat." The Emperor was diplomatically informed that Shivaji had been taken ill in the unaccustomed heat of the Imperial Darbar and Ram Singh was then ordered to take Shivaji back to his residence without waiting till the end of the Darbar. Thus ended the historic meeting between Shivaji and Aurangzeb, when not a word passed between them.

Shivaji was placed under semi-detention at Agra. Aurangzeb asked him to hand over all his forts and territory. Shivaji, on his part, offered to pay the Emperor two crores of rupees if all his lately ceded forts were restored to him and he was allowed to return home. Aurangzeb tightened the net around him and his detention became very strict. Shivaji then petitioned the Emperor : "I am willing to cede all my forts. But my merely sending orders from here will not do, as my officers will not obey them. If I go there, I shall fight with my officers and hand over the forts to the imperial agents." The Emperor, however, insisted that Shivaji should only write to his officers to surrender the forts.

Shivaji's life was literally hanging in the balance. The records mention at least three occasions when his death was imminent, but was postponed for some reason or the other. In the meantime, Shivaji also made every effort to secure his freedom. The greasing of the palm of every functionary from a peon to the Prime Minister merrily went on for three months, and Shivaji ran into a debt of Rs. 66,000. He borrowed the money from Ram Singh by giving him a hundi payable by his officers to Jai Singh in the Deccan. The hundi was duly encashed at the Rajgad treasury.

Soon Aurangzeb ordered Shivaji to be removed to the residence of one Vithaldas. According to Manucci, the machinations of the Mughals were that once Shivaji was interned in Vithaldas' house, he was to be strangled to death at a suitable opportunity, and the whole episode was to be given the appearance of an accident. The official history of the Mughals is silent on this point; but Manucci certainly had good means of knowing what was going on at the Imperial Court. Shivaji himself wrote to Jaswant Singh on his return to the Deccan : "I fled from Agra in fear of my life." On 17th August 1666 Shivaji escaped from detention, and throwing his pursuers off the scent, safely reached Rajgad—on 12th September 1666 according to one report. Annoyed and angered at the escape of Shivaji, Aurangzeb ordered the arrest of his lieutenant Netaji Palkar who had defected to the Mughals. After three days of torture, he was forced to embrace Islam and named Muhammad Quli. His wives were also brought from the Deccan and made Muslims. He was then sent to Kabul to serve with the Mughal army for ten years. He could return to Shivaji only in 1676, when he was converted back to Hinduism.

After his return to the Deccan, Shivaji diplomatically wrote to Aurangzeb in more or less the following terms :

It was my ardent desire to remain at Agra and to serve Your Imperial Majesty further. I would even have gone on an expedition to Kandahar. It is indeed my lasting misfortune that I was separated from the august feet of Your Imperial Majesty.

With the Persian invasion threatening on the north-western borders of India, Aurangzeb also thought it fit to send a reply of which the gist was :

Very happy to receive your letter. How much we wish you could have stayed for a longer period and tasted of our welcome at Agra. We had decided to load you with more favours and to show you greater grace and kindness. We can only regret your departure; but we wish you well. Now our son Muazzam is in Aurangabad. Be firm in obedience to him and you may conquer as much of Bijapur as you can.

Both diplomats of the first order ! But Shivaji used to say till the end of his days that the only mistake he committed in his life

was his visit to Agra and Aurangzeb said his greatest mistake was that he allowed Shivaji to escape from Agra ! Aurangzeb died on 20th February 1707 and in his last will and testament he wrote:

The greatest pillar of a Government is the keeping of information about everything that happens in the kingdom, while even a minute's negligence results in shame for long years. See how the flight of the wretch Shiva, which was due to carelessness, has involved me in all these distracting campaigns to the end of my days.

III

Prof. Jadunath Sarkar observes :

The historian who digs down to the root causes of great events cannot help feeling that Shivaji's visit to Aurangzeb produced as its ultimate consequence a revolution in the destiny of the Maratha people. This event marks a decisive turning point in the history of India as a whole.⁶

The insults heaped by Aurangzeb rankled in Shivaji's mind till the end, and he became convinced for ever that the word of the Mughal was not to be trusted.

For the next three years, however, Shivaji tried to curry favour with the Mughals with all the arts of diplomacy that he could command. He had to consolidate his own position first, before he could contend with the mighty Mughals. He wrote to Prince Muazzam, the new Viceroy of the Deccan :

My son Shambhuji has been created a commander of five thousand but has received no jagir as tankha. I now beg that His Majesty may pardon the offences of this servant, restore the mansab of my son and assign a jagir to him. I am ready to render service in person wherever I am ordered.

This was agreed to by the Emperor, and Sambhaji met Muazzam at Aurangabad on 4th November 1667. Sambhaji was created a commander of five thousand with a jagir at Malkapur in Berar and on 5th August 1668, a Maratha contingent left for Aurangabad under Pratap Rao and Niraji Raoji.

Shivaji also requested that the title Raja might be conferred on him. Some of our modern historians feel that Shivaji could never make such a request. One historian goes to the extent of saying that Shivaji's open defiance of the Emperor at Agra was in fact motivated by a desire to escape being given the title 'Raja' by the Emperor in a fit of generosity ! The significance of one of the proudest moments in the history of India is thus being distorted ! Another suggestion is that the securing of the title 'Raja' was indeed a feat of diplomacy on Shivaji's part. The Sultans of Bijapur and Golkonda called him a robber and a free-booter, as he had seized areas from their kingdom; but now their overlord, the Emperor of India, had himself called Shivaji a Raja. It was as if Shivaji had flaunted in their face a regular order from the highest imperial authority recognising his status. On 9th March 1668, Prince Muazzam himself wrote to Shivaji :

His Gracious Majesty has elevated your head by granting you the title of Raja, which was the extreme point of your desires.

It is clear that Shivaji stooped to conquer and his intention was not merely to conquer but even to destroy the Mughal Empire when the moment was opportune.

For three years, from 1667 to 1669, Shivaji was busy husbanding his resources, framing regulations for the governance of his territory, and preparing for his final assault on the bastions of the Mughal empire. In November 1667, Shivaji's forces marched into the Portuguese territory of Bardes in pursuit of the Desais of South Konkan, who had taken refuge there and were making it a base of their operations against Shivaji. Some historians have tried to show that Shivaji attacked the Portuguese to punish them for their proselytizing activities. He is thus sought to be projected as a champion of Hinduism ! There is no doubt that Shivaji was a devout Hindu. His renovation of the temple of Saptakotishvar at Narve and of Jagadishvar at Raigad, and the grant given by him to the temple of Ghrishneshvar at Verul, are standing examples of Shivaji's great concern for the religion and culture of his forefathers. But he did not allow politics to be mixed up with religion. The object of his campaign against the Portuguese was purely political, namely, to punish them for having given refuge and encouragement to the rebel Desais of South

Konkan. Prof. Pissurlencar, who has brought out a well-documented study of Portuguese-Maratha relations, has expressed similar views.⁷ The terms of the treaty of 1670 between Shivaji and the Portuguese also do not refer to any religious issues.

In 1670 Shivaji broke his peace with the Mughals and the fury of his attack was so great that he was immediately rewarded with a series of successes which wiped out the humiliation of the Treaty of Purandar. On 4th February, Kondana was captured after a memorable fight in which Shivaji's lieutenant, Tanaji Malusare, laid down his life. On 8th March, Purandar was recovered by Nilo Pant. By the end of June 1670, the forts of Kalyan, Lohgad, Mahuli, Karnala and Rohida fell to Shivaji. In October of the same year, Shivaji made a second raid on Surat and plundered the larger houses of that opulent city for three whole days, carrying off a booty of Rs. 66 lakhs. As the raiders were returning with their loot, they were confronted by the Mughal army under Daud Khan. But the Mughals suffered heavy losses in the battle of Dindori which took place on 17th October 1670. Bhimsen Saksena has given a graphic eyewitness account of this battle in his *Tarikh-i-Dilkusha*. In December 1670, Shivaji captured the forts of Ahivant, Markanda, Ravla and Javla in Baglana and entered the territory of Khandesh. Advancing still further, he carried off booty worth nearly a crore of rupees from the rich and fertile province of Berar. In the meanwhile, Moro Pant Peshwa had captured the fort of Trimbak in October 1670 and on 5th January 1671 the fort of Salhir also fell to the Marathas. The English records mention that the Mughal generals, Bahadur Khan and Dilar Khan, were forced to retreat from the Maratha country with shame and loss. In 1672, the Marathas annexed the Koli States of Jawhar and Ramnagar in North Konkan.

During all this time Aurangzeb was busy suppressing the Pathan rebellion in the north, and the stream of reports that went to him from the Deccan spoke of a succession of reverses for the Mughal armies. Shivaji's conception of strategy was brilliant. He made use of every instrument of war. The nature of his attacks, their timing and the methods of warfare he employed win our instant admiration for this outstanding leader of men. Shivaji's intelligence system is also praised by Francois Martin, the French

7. P. S. Pissurlencar, *Portuguese Maratha Sambandh*, Poona University, 1967.

Governor of Pondicherry: The English records of Bombay mention that Shivaji's spies were spread all over the island. Fort after fort was seized from the Mughal qiladars and Aurangabad was flooded with refugees from all parts of the Deccan. The Mughals were aghast.

In August 1669, Aurangzeb had destroyed the Vishveshvar Temple at Benares, and some historians hold that Shivaji's fierce attack on the Mughals was in retaliation for the Emperor's iconoclastic measures. However, Shivaji appears to have been motivated more by political than by religious considerations. Ever since his return from Agra, it had been clear to him that Aurangzeb wanted to destroy him, and a war with the Mughals was therefore inevitable. He had accordingly been preparing for it. Considering the tiny kingdom of Shivaji, with only twelve forts, and the vast resources of the Mughal Empire, a lesser man than he would have shrunk from such a course. But Shivaji knew that the Mughal Empire was an empty show; he had seen it in all its glory and all its decadence during his visit to Agra. Moreover, he was fighting for the protection of his motherland and he knew that his cause was just. It was this conviction that sustained him as well as his successors in the long struggle against Aurangzeb which continued for almost forty years until the death of that Emperor in 1707. In the intervening period, Shivaji died, his son Sambhaji was captured and put to death by Aurangzeb, Sambhaji's wife and son were taken prisoners and Rajaram who succeeded Sambhaji also died. The struggle went through many vicissitudes; but ultimately the Marathas emerged victorious and Aurangzeb died a broken man.

At this stage we may pause to consider the nature of Mughal rule in India, as that will enable us to understand why Shivaji decided to strike a decisive blow against it. The Mughals were not really Mongolians; they were Turks from Central Asia. Emperor Akbar was a great gift of the Turkish people to our country. He realised that there could be no salvation for the State unless there was a genuine understanding among the various religious communities living in a country. Akbar appointed a bureau of translators which translated into Persian the eighteen cantos of the *Mahabharata* including the *Bhagavadgita*, and the

Yogavasistha. The torch was carried forward during the reign of Emperor Jahangir, when Mulla Masih translated the *Ramayana* of Valmiki and Faizee wrote an epic poem in Persian on the story of Nala and Damayanti. Prince Dara Shukoh, the eldest son of Emperor Shah Jahan, was an outstanding scholar who studied the doctrines of the *Vedanta*, the *Talmud*, and the *New Testament* besides the works of Sufi writers. The patron of Pandit-raj Jagannath, he also arranged for the translation of the *Atharvaveda* and of several *Upanishads* into Persian. This trend towards liberalism was however reversed by Aurangzeb when he became the Emperor in 1658. In order to strengthen his hold on the Imperial Throne, Aurangzeb wanted to condemn his eldest brother, Dara Shukoh as siding with the infidels; he also wanted to gain the support of the Mullahs and Moulavis by waging a ceaseless war against the infidels. Himself an orthodox Muslim belonging to the Hanafi school of the Sunni sect, Aurangzeb looked upon the Mughal Empire as an Islamic State, and he subordinated the policies of his government to the dictates of orthodox religion. Under his rule, the Hindus were equated with the Kafirs who fought against the Prophet at Mecca. On 9th April 1669, a general order was issued for the destruction of Hindu temples. The temple of Vishvanath at Benares was razed to the ground and a mosque was built in its place. Keshavji ka Kathda at Mathura, to which Dara had presented a beautiful balustrade, was pulled down, and a mosque of red stone was erected in its place. Jaziya was imposed on all Hindus, and the Hindu merchants were required to pay an additional import duty of 3% on all imported goods. The Hindus thus became second class citizens under Aurangzeb's rule, and their way of life was in complete jeopardy.

Secondly, there was personal rule during Aurangzeb's time, and all powers were concentrated in the person of the Emperor who was the fountain-head of all decisions. He ruled with the help of a bureaucracy which consisted mostly of foreigners. Although Aurangzeb was born in this country and he died in this country, he was extremely proud of his Turrani origin and his racial consciousness was very strong. He held the Indians in contempt and often made a distinction between "you Hindustanis" and "we Turranis". Turks from Central Asia and even Persians were preferred to Indians for recruitment to positions of authority. In his book *The Mughal Nobility under Aurangzeb*,

Prof. Mohammad Athar Ali of Aligarh University has given a Civil List of Aurangzeb's time indicating the racial origins of the various dignitaries, and it is very revealing. The Mughal Empire then consisted of 22 Subahs and during the fifty years of Aurangzeb's reign a total number of 137 persons were appointed as the Governors of these Subahs. Only two of them were Hindus, namely, Mirza Raja Jai Singh and Maharaja Jaswant Singh. The remaining 135 were Muslims, and of them only a very few belonged to families which had settled down in India for five to six generations. The rest had come recently from Samarkand, Bokhara, Khorasan or Iran, or from some other place in Central Asia. 75% of these officers were thus foreigners. After Jaswant Singh's death, the recruitment of Rajputs to higher positions in the Mughal Empire was stopped.

Indeed, the men who ruled India from the central throne of Delhi during the medieval period, and their leading noblemen, were all foreigners and not Indian Muslims. As Prof. M. Mujeeb observes in his scholarly work on the Indian Muslims, Muslim rule in medieval India was a minority government based on the apathy of the ruled and consisting heavily of foreign elements.⁸ It was this alien rule, which became intolerable under the fanatic Emperor Aurangzeb, that Shivaji wanted to bring to an end. It is interesting to note in this connection that in Shivaji's documents Mughals are referred to as 'तुक़' or 'ताम' (the red-faced ones). A mention of their religion is rarely made. The Siddis too are called not the Muslims of Janjira but 'जंजियाचे श्यामल' (the dark complexioned people of Janjira). The emphasis in Maratha documents is thus on the racial characteristics of these foreigners.

On 6th June 1674, Shivaji had himself crowned at Raigad, thereby proclaiming to the world that he had thrown off the foreign yoke and become a legally constituted monarch in his own right. He wanted to give to his people an administration which would strive for their welfare and which would make no discrimination on grounds of race or religion. He set up a system of government based largely on the teachings of the ancient

8. M. Mujeeb, *The Indian Muslims*, George Allen & Unwin, London, 1967.

Indian texts on polity. A Council of Eight Ministers was constituted and they were given Sanskrit designations. A Deccani-Sanskrit dictionary of administrative terms (राजध्यद्वारकोश) was prepared. Instead of 'अजरखत्खाने शिवाजीराजे दामदौलतह' we now find the document mentioning 'क्षत्रियकुलावतंस शिवचत्रपति यांनी आज्ञा केली ऐसाजे' A new era called the 'Rajyabhiseka Era' was commenced and a new leaf was opened in the history of this country.

Let us now get back to the conquests of Shivaji. On 24th November 1672, Ali Adilshah II of Bijapur died and he was succeeded on the throne by a boy of four years. The kingdom was riven with dissension and discord among its leading noblemen, and disturbances broke out. Shivaji took this opportunity to strike at this enemy of the Maratha kingdom. On 6th March 1673, the fort of Panhala was recaptured, and soon thereafter Parli and Satara also fell to the Marathas. In 1675 Shivaji marched into South Konkan and seized the most important Bijapuri fort of Phonda near Goa. Proceeding to Kanara, he captured Karwar and by 25th May 1675 the Adilshahi territory as far south as the Gangavali river passed into his hands.

From 1672 to 1677 Bahadur Khan was the commander-in-chief and Mughal viceroy of the Deccan. He shifted his headquarters from Aurangabad to Pedgaon (near Daund) which was renamed Bahadurgad ; but the Maratha forces kept him constantly on the run. Bahadur Khan was harassed so much by the manoeuvres of the Marathas that in 1675, when Shivaji opened peace negotiations with him, he readily welcomed them. As a matter of fact, Shivaji wanted some respite from possible Mughal attacks while he was busy with the siege of Phonda. It was proposed that Shivaji would surrender 17 of his forts to the Mughals, and also send his son Sambhaji to serve under the Mughal viceroy. The negotiations were purposefully prolonged. Eventually, when the Emperor accepted these terms, Bahadur Khan sent his envoys to Shivaji to ask him to receive the imperial farman and deliver the forts. But by this time Phonda had already been captured by the Marathas. Bhimsen Saksena tells us that Shivaji received the Mughal envoys with all hospitality ; but on the next day told them : "What brave deeds have you done that I should seek peace with you ? Get away from here speedily

or else you may be disgraced." Time and again the Mughal generals thus fell a prey to the baits laid out by Shivaji !

Shivaji's attention soon turned further south, to the large and rich province of Jinji which was known as Bijapuri Karnataka. One third of it was held by Shivaji's half-brother Vyankoji as successor to their father Shahaji, and two thirds by two Adilshahi noblemen named Nasir Muhammad Khan and Sher Khan Lodi. Shivaji wanted to conquer the baronies of these two noblemen and to add to them his share of his father's estates, so that he could carve out a separate dominion in the south. Fortunately, Raghunath Pant Hanmante, who was for a long time the guardian and regent of Vyankoji, had now entered Shivaji's service and his great local knowledge of the southern kingdoms was of considerable help to Shivaji. Madanna, the influential Hindu Vazir of the Qutb Shah of Golkonda, was also favourable to Shivaji. He was in fact keen on a joint enterprise between the Qutb Shah and Shivaji to conquer Bijapuri Karnataka at this most opportune time, when the Adilshahi was paralysed by a civil war between its Pathan and Deccani noblemen, and the Mughal Viceroy Bahadur Khan was also intent on destroying the Adilshahi kingdom.

Shivaji was certainly not the person to miss this favourable concourse of circumstances for achieving his own ends. He sent his minister Niraji Raoji to Bahadur Khan, to induce him to maintain peace during his projected campaign in the Karnataka. The Mughal Viceroy, who was weary of his war with the elusive Marathas and wanted to intensify his campaign against Bijapur, readily agreed, though it is said that he received a large bribe in the bargain. An interview was then arranged between Shivaji and the Qutb Shah of Golkonda through the good offices of Madanna and Pralhad Niraji, Shivaji's resident ambassador at Hyderabad. Shivaji left Raigad and in February 1677 reached Hyderabad where he was received with great honour and gaiety. He met the Qutb Shah at Dad Mahal (Palace of Justice) on 4th March 1677. The Shah was deeply impressed by the personal magnetism of Shivaji and by his wonderful achievements. The two monarchs came to a secret understanding for the conquest of the Tanjore region for which the Qutb Shah agreed to supply both men and money.

After leaving Hyderabad, Shivaji paid a visit to the sacred shrine of Shri Shaila and then proceeded to Jinji. He captured the fort of Jinji in May 1677 and then laid siege to the fort of Vellore. However, as the siege was prolonged, Shivaji left it in the hands of his lieutenants and himself marched southwards, where he inflicted a crushing defeat on Sher Khan Lodi of Wali-gunda-puram. Advancing further south, Shivaji went right up to the bank of the Kolerun river, collecting tribute from the Nayak of Madura.

The French envoy, M. Germain, who spent three days in Shivaji's camp on the Kolerun, is all praise for the latter's simplicity and efficiency. He says :

Shivaji's camp is without any pomp and unembarrassed by baggage or women. There are only two tents in it, but of a thick simple stuff and very small—one for himself and the other for his minister.

What a striking contrast with the Mughal general ! Bhimsen Saksena tells us that Mahabat Khan, whom Aurangzeb had sent to the Deccan in 1670 to overcome Shivaji, had in his camp 400 dancing girls from Kabul and Kandahar !

A meeting was soon arranged between Shivaji and his half-brother Vyankoji ; but no agreement was possible about the partitioning of their father's estate. The armies of the two brothers stood facing each other across the Kolerun and they joined in battle in November 1677. Eventually a peace was made. Shivaji retained the Jinji territory, a few forts, and for some time the Mysore tableland. The territory south of the Kolerun was left to Vyankoji, along with some portion to the north.

Shivaji commenced his return journey to Maharashtra at the beginning of November 1677 and reached Panhala in April 1678. On the way he took possession of his father's jagir districts of Kolar, Hoskote, Bangalore, Balapur and Sera. In August 1678 the fort of Vellore also fell to the Marathas after a protracted siege. In March 1679 Shivaji captured the fort of Koppal to the north of the Tungabhadra river so as to connect his newly won dominion in the south to his northern kingdom. Sabhasad has estimated that the territory gained by Shivaji in the Karnataka

(including parts of both Karnataka and Tamil Nadu of the present day) contained a hundred forts and yielded an annual revenue of 20 lakh hons.

According to Sarkar, "Shivaji's grand coronation in June 1674 had greatly reduced his treasury balance" and "gold, not land, was his chief object" in the Karnataka expedition.⁹ On the other hand, Shejwalkar has expressed the view that Shivaji wanted to present himself as an heir to the fallen Vijayanagara empire by capturing its erstwhile capital of Vellore, and to bring under his banner the Hindu chieftains of the south in a united campaign against the Mughals. Shivaji is thus credited with a consciousness of history, and an ideological base is sought to be given to his southern conquests. Shejwalkar's view is based on a letter which Shivaji is supposed to have written to Vyankoji in 1675, urging him to capture Vellore. It is, however, doubtful whether this letter is genuine. No other evidence in support of Shejwalkar's contention seems to be forthcoming. Apparently, territorial annexation was a major objective of Shivaji's expedition. In any case, the fort of Jinji provided a safe refuge for Shivaji's son Rajaram a decade later when he had to flee from Maharashtra against the advancing Mughal armies.

In December 1678 Shivaji met with a major disappointment in his life. His son and heir Sambhaji deserted him and joined the Mughal general, Dilir Khan. Many attempts have been made to explain Sambhaji's alienation from his father who, it is said, did not understand the psychology of his son. During his Karnataka campaign, Shivaji had left Sambhaji at Shringarpur in charge of the Subhedari of Prabhavali, so that there might be no conflict at Raigad where the younger son Rajaram was kept. But Sambhaji entered into secret correspondence with Dilir Khan, and when this came to light, he was removed to the fort of Parli under the care of Samarth Ramdas Swami. On 13th December 1678, Sambhaji overawed the qiladar and fled to Dilir Khan's camp. Shivaji's son-in-law Mahadaji Naik Nimbalkar, who was then in the Mughal camp, asked Sambhaji why he had come to Dilir Khan. Bhimsen Saksena tells us that Sambhaji reported this to the Khan, who promptly arrested Mahadaji and kept him in confinement for some days. Sambhaji

9. J. N. Sarkar, *op.cit.*, p. 276.

accompanied Dilar Khan on his campaigns, but in about a year's time got sick of him and his cruel ways. In the meantime, Shivaji's agents were also active in trying to persuade Sambhaji to return to his father. On the night of 20th November 1679 Sambhaji slipped out of the Mughal camp and reached Panhala by about the 4th of December. Sabhasad has given a very touching description of the reunion that took place between father and son, when Shivaji said :

लेकरा मला सोडूं नको (Do not desert me, my child)

He offered to Sambhaji the dominion of Jinji, but the latter replied:

आपणास साहेबांचे पायांची जोड आहे. आपण दूधभात खाऊन साहेबांचे पायाचे चितन करून राहीन.

(I crave for your august feet and shall lead a life of simplicity in your service).

In August 1679, Shivaji took up seriously the work of fortifying the island of Khanderi, 11 miles south of Bombay and 30 miles north of Janjira. His idea was to build up a naval base there to counter the activities of the Siddi of Janjira who was well entrenched on the western coast and caused harassment to Shivaji's subjects. The English, who had their seat at Bombay, were however apprehensive at this and their Deputy Governor requested the Maratha Commander to "quit the place (Khanderi) as it belonged to the island of Bombay". As the request was declined and the work of fortifications went ahead, an encounter took place between the Marathas and the English in which the latter were worsted. In November 1679 when the Siddi also joined the English in blockading the island of Khanderi, Shivaji threatened to invade Bombay and gathered a large army at Kalyan. The President and the Council of the English at Surat became alarmed at this and, much against the recommendations of the Deputy Governor, they made peace with Shivaji. Khanderi remained in the hands of the Marathas.

On 2nd April 1679, the Emperor Aurangzeb issued a general order imposing jaziya on all his Hindu subjects. This brought forth a spirited but cogent letter of protest from Shivaji which entitles him to a place among the greatest Indians of all times. The letter was drafted by his secretary, Nilakanth Prabhu, in eloquent Persian. Shivaji writes :

To the Emperor Alamgir. This firm well-wisher Shivaji, deeply grateful for divine favour and your kindness as clear as daylight, begs to inform your Majesty as follows :

I returned from your presence without seeking your permission. It is my misfortune. But I am ready to serve you in every possible way. May your kindness be felt by everybody. As a well-wisher I am placing some matters before you.

Recently it has come to my ears that owing to your war against me, your treasury has become empty. You have decided to meet the expenditure through the imposition of jaziya on the Hindus.

Your Majesty, Akbar the founder of your empire ruled for fifty-two years. He adopted the excellent policy of treating with peace and equality, Christians, Jews, Muslims, Dadupanthis, Stargazers, Malakis, Atheists, Brahmins, Jains, in fact all the communities. His aim was to ensure the welfare and protection of all. That is why he came to be known as the jagadguru. The result was that to whatever direction he turned, success and glory attended his arms. He brought most of the country under his sway.

After him Nuruddin Jahangir ruled for twenty-two years. He led a life full of good deeds and became immortal. Shah Jahan ruled for thirty-two years. He too made his life fruitful through good deeds. That is why these rulers were successful in whatever direction they turned. During their rule a number of provinces and forts came under their sway. They have passed away, but their name endures. Their greatness is beyond description. One measure of their greatness is that Alamgir has tried to imitate them but without success. He is at a loss to understand why this should be so.

The previous rulers, had they so desired, had certainly the power to impose jaziya. But they felt that all men, big and small, were the children of God, and all religions, but means to the worship of the Almighty. They never allowed the feeling of religious hatred even to touch them. The memory of their kindness, and the good deeds they did,

is always fresh in the world. All men great and small praise and bless them. During their rule the people had peace, and as a result, their glory increased day by day and success attended their affairs.

But during your regime many provinces and forts have gone out of your hands. The remaining provinces and forts too will be lost to you. I will not spare any effort to ruin the provinces. Your subjects are crushed. The income from your Paraganas and Mahals is decreasing day by day. It is difficult to realise even one thousand from places the income whereof was one lakh previously. Poverty is striking the kings and princes. The plight of noblemen and mansabdars is apparent to everybody. At present your soldiers are discontented, the Moslems are in anguish and the Hindus are scorched. Men are pining for bread. They are red in face because they have been striking their mouths with their hands.

They are in such deep distress, and yet you have imposed jaziya on them. How could you do this? This evil news will spread from east to west. People will say "The Emperor of Hindustan has taken a begging bowl and is out to realise jaziya from Brahmins, Jains, Sadhus, Jogis, Sanyasis, Bairagis, the poor and the starving people. He takes pride in doing so. He is laying in dust the name of the Taimur dynasty." Such will be the deep feeling of the people.

Your Majesty, in the Quran, God has been described as the Rabbul Alameen, the Lord of the entire universe, and not as Rabbul Musalmin, the Lord of the Mussalmans. In fact, Islam and Hinduism are both beautiful manifestations of the Divine Spirit. The call for prayers is given in the mosques, bells ring to the Divine glory in the temples. Any-one bearing fanaticism and religious hatred must be said to be acting against the commands of God. To presume to draw lines on these pictures is verily to lay blame on the Divine Artist (God).

To point out blemishes in any creation only means that you are blaming the creator. Do not do so.

To be just, jaziya cannot be justified on any grounds. It is an innovation in India. This is unjust. If you feel

that on grounds of religion and justice the imposition of this tax is essential, you should first realise it from Raja Rajsingh. For he is the leader of the Hindus. It will not then be difficult to realise it from this well-wisher.¹⁰

This plea for tolerance in public affairs is indeed the plea of a great patriot and a great Indian. In an age of bigotry, Shivaji stands out as the beacon-light of true religious understanding. As Sarkar observes :

Religion remained with him an ever-fresh fountain of right conduct and generosity ; it did not obsess his mind nor harden him into a bigot.¹¹

Shivaji made endowments for Hindu temples as well as for Muslim mosques and saints' tombs. Persons of all religions and communities were equally eligible for service in his civil and military establishments. His private secretary was a Muslim named Qazi Haidar ; his chief naval commanders were also Muslims of the names of Daulat Khan and Siddi Misri.

The insignia of royalty and the minting of new coins which Shivaji ordered indicate that he wanted to demonstrate his total break with the Mughal Empire. It was also his firm belief that his kingdom was divinely ordained (हे राज्य क्वावे हे श्रीचे मनांत फार आहे) and he used his royal authority for the well-being of his people. Shivaji was especially solicitous about the welfare of the peasantry. As the Zamindars were often unjust to the cultivators, he kept them under strict control ; and he did not create any fresh middlemen between the government and the tillers of the soil.

Shivaji's letter dated 16th April 1673 addressed to the Jumledars, Havaldars and Karkuns in charge of his army at Chiplun, speaks volumes about his concern for the common folk in the countryside. Shivaji writes in this letter :

कोण्ही कुण्बाचे येथील दाणे आणील. कोण्ही भाकर, कोण्ही गवत, कोण्ही फाटे, कोण्ही भाजी, कोण्ही पाले. एसे करु लागलेत म्हणजे जीं कुण्बां घर घरून जीवभात्र घेऊन राहीलीं आहेत तेहि जाऊ लागतील. कितक उपासी मराया लागतील. म्हणज त्याला एसे होईल की मोगल मुलकात आले,

10. *Vide Setu Madhava Rao Pagadi, Chhatrapati Shivaji, Continental Prakashan, Poona, 1974, pp. 312-14.*

11. J. N. Sarkar, *op. cit.*, p. 383.

त्याहून अधिक तुम्ही ऐसा तळतळाट होईल.. हे तुम्ही बरे जाणोन, सिपाही हो अगर पावसालक हो, बहुत यादी धरून वर्तणक करणे.. कोणही रयतेस काडीचा अजार द्यावया गरज नाही.. ज्याला जै पाहिज, दाणा हो अगर गवत हो, अगर फाटे, भाजीपाले व वरकड विकाया येईल तें रास द्यावे. बाजारात जावे, रास विकत आणावे. कोणहावरी जुळूस अगर ज्याजती अगर कोणहासी कलागती कराया गरज नाही..

(If you rob the poor cultivators of their grain, bread, grass, fuel or vegetables, they will find life impossible and run away. Many will die of starvation. Then they will think that you are worse than the Mughals who overrun the countryside. Know this well and behave yourself. You have no business to give the slightest trouble to the ryots. Whatever you want—whether grain, grass, fuel, vegetables or other provisions—you should purchase it in the bazaar. There is no need for you to force anybody or to quarrel with anybody.)

Shivaji threw careers open to talent and built up small men to achieve great deeds. Therein lay his genius as an administrator. Moro Pant Pingle, a family priest, could become his Prime Minister ; Annaji Datto, a village accountant, could rise to be his Finance Minister. The men groomed by Shivaji faced the greatest generals in battle and the greatest statesmen in diplomacy. Sonaji Pant Dabir negotiated with Aurangzeb and Sundarji Prabhu with the English. Prahlad Niraji was the Maratha envoy at the court of the Qutb Shah.

Jadunath Sarkar has succinctly described the administrative deals of Shivaji in the following words :

Shivaji aimed at giving his subjects peace, universal toleration, equal opportunities for all castes and creeds, a beneficent, active and pure system of administration, a navy for promoting trade and a trained militia for guarding the homeland.¹²

After December 1679, Shivaji's health started declining. The incessantly hectic activity of nearly 35 years was telling upon him. On 23rd March 1680, he fell ill and around noon on Saturday, 3rd April 1680 (which was the full moon of Chaitra), this great son of India passed away into eternity.

12. J. N. Sarkar, *House of Shivaji*, p. 114.

As I said earlier, the career of Shivaji is a fascinating story of continuously expanding horizons. The seed which he planted in the soil of Maharashtra eventually grew into a huge banyan tree with branches sprawling far and wide ; and within less than a century the Maratha influence was felt throughout the length and breadth of this vast country. A small stream had grown into the mighty Ganges. When Ahmed Shah Abdali invaded India from Afghanistan, the Rajput Princes remained aloof while the Rohillas and the Nawab of Oudh joined hands with the foreign invader. It was only the Marathas who met Abdali in battle in 1761 on the famous field of Panipat. They suffered grievous losses ; but Abdali returned to Afghanistan and never saw Delhi again. In the early 19th century even the British regarded the Marathas as their principal enemy and they sought to eliminate them from the pages of Indian history. The period up to 1760 was described in our text books as the Mughal Period and it was immediately followed by the British Period. No independent status was accorded to the Marathas. They were also characterised as plunderers and freebooters ; but mere plunderers and freebooters could not have ruled for over a hundred years. The 18th century in Indian history was truly the century of the Marathas, and it was Shivaji who awakened his compatriots to a consciousness of their national identity and inspired them to break asunder the several centuries old yoke of Turkish domination.

The Royal Seal which Shivaji adopted aptly described his ideals and his achievements :

प्रतिपच्चव्ररेखे व विद्युविश्ववंदिता ।
शाहसुनोः शिवस्येषा मुद्रा भद्राय राजते ॥

(Like the new moon, this seal of Shiva, son of Shahaji, grows in splendour with every passing day. Respected by the whole world, it spreads its benediction over one and all.)

May the memory of Shivaji and his teachings of patriotism, tolerance and universal welfare guide us in all our endeavours !

The Foundation of Swarajya

J. V. NAIK

The foundation of Swarajya by Shivaji was a decisive historical event. This unique phenomenon in Indian history can hardly be ascribed to any particular cause. It was a composite movement caused by the interaction of various forces which had long been at work in Maharashtra. But it must be said at the very outset that it was left to the supreme genius of Shivaji to canalize all the available forces into one patriotic current and to establish an independent Maratha nation-state.

Contemporary authors and later Bakhar writers considered Shivaji Maharaj an avatar (incarnation) and saw a divine hand in the foundation of Swarajya.¹ Considering the almost miraculous achievements of Shivaji, we can well understand their feelings. But curiously enough, even the contemporary foreign accounts lend support to the avatar theory when they speak of Shivaji in superhuman terms.²

It was Justice Ranade who for the first time in his classic *Rise of the Maratha Power* gave a lucid exposition of the rationale behind the birth of the concept of Swarajya. The rise of Maratha Power, he pointed out, was not a mere accident of history; it was a great manifestation of a true national spirit, embodied in the concept of Swarajya. There is considerable force in Ranade's argument that "the ground was prepared partly by nature, partly by the ancient history of the country, partly by the religious revival, but chiefly by the long discipline in arms which the country had undergone under Mahomedan rule for three hundred years".³

1. *Krishnaji Anant Sabhasadachi Bakhar Kathit Chhatrapati Shivprabhuchen Charitra* 2nd ed. (*Sabhasad Bakhar*), ed. V. S. Vakaskar, Venus Prakashan, Poona, 1960, p. 2. (The other contemporary works such as *Shivabharat* and *Raja Vyavahara Kosh* also mention Shivaji as an avatar.)
2. *English Records on Shivaji*, Shivacharitra Karyalaya, Poona, 1931, I, No. 89, p. 88 ; II, No. 270, p. 149.
3. M. G. Ranade, *Rise of the Maratha Power*, Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Delhi, 1961, p. 17.

One may not agree with all the conclusions of Ranade, but few will deny that it was he who for the first time took a dynamic view of Maratha history, and presented a new approach and a fresh outlook regarding the foundation of Swarajya.

Ever since the days of Ranade, incessant research has been carried on in Maratha history. The prodigious labours of historians like Rajwade, Khare, Sarkar, Sardesai, Bal Krishna and many others during the course of the present century have uncovered facts which impeach the validity of some of the former generalisations respecting the political life and thought of the Maratha people. The invaluable material that they have brought to light helps us to understand the Maratha freedom movement, under the extraordinary leadership of Shivaji, in its true historical perspective.

The ideal of Swarajya came into being in response to the pressing need of the times. It signified the resurgence of Maharashtra which had fallen into a moribund condition under alien rule. It was not by accident that the Marathas inhabiting the hills of Sahyadri came to be politically sensitized beyond all other nationalities of India so as to establish an independent nation-state. Under the impact of forces working from within and without, there cropped up in Maharashtra something very akin to nationalism which facilitated the process of nation-building.

Maratha nationalism was a compound of geographical integration and linguistic and cultural affinity, cemented by a common religious faith and stimulated by the galling Muslim domination.⁴

Of the various elements that went into the making of the Maratha nation, religion was perhaps the strongest at least in its formative stage. Ever since the advent of the Muslim Rule the people of Maharashtra had lived in a terribly depressing condition. Their freedom was lost; their religion was treated with open disregard and their cherished susceptibilities were outraged in a wanton manner.⁵ It was in this condition that

4. V. V. Joshi, *Clash of Three Empires (The Rise of the Maratha Nation)*, Kitabistan, Allahabad, 1941, pp. 49-70.
5. G. S. Sardesai, *The Main Currents of Maratha History*, (Mahikavati Bakhar cited), Keshav Bhikaji Dhavale, Bombay, 1933, p.3.

the concept of Maharashtra Dharma, which was at the root of Swarajya, came into being in defence of their way of living. It was not directed against Islam, nor was it intended for the propagation of the Hindu religion. It was certainly not meant to establish a communal empire. Its basic aim was to preserve and carry forward the ancient religion and culture of all the people residing in Maharashtra who are known by the comprehensive term Maratha. But "once the safety and integrity of Maharashtra Dharma was secured," observes Prof. S. R. Sharma, "it ceased to be merely or even mainly religious. It tended to become more and more political; but the original impulse indubitably came from religion."⁶

A new moral force was added to the existing influences by the teachings of the saints of Maharashtra. Though it may be difficult to assess with precision their contributions to Maratha freedom, there is no doubt that the movement which the saints led for the spiritual and social emancipation of the masses produced a new spirit of democratic equality and homogeneity among the people of Maharashtra. The intensity of this socio-religious movement can be gauged from the fact that not only the peasantry but even the depressed classes produced saints like Chokhamela and Banka Mahar.⁷

With Ramdas, the reformist movement underwent a profound metamorphosis; it became a religio-political rather than a purely religious movement. There is no unanimity among historians and scholars regarding the exact relationship between Shivaji and Ramdas.⁸ Whatever the degree of their mutual acquaintance or intimacy, I suppose it will be agreed that they were "the best and greatest exponents of Maharashtra Dharma", one representing the political power of Swarajya and the other, the spiritual.

The sterling qualities of the Maratha character form another important factor that needs to be stressed while accounting for the rise of the Maratha nation. After all, a nation could only be what its people make of it. The nature of the Maratha country

6. S. R. Sharma, *The Founding of Maratha Freedom*, rev. ed., Orient Longman, 1964, p. 2.

7. M. G. Ranade, *op. cit.*, pp. 66-76; V. V. Joshi, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

8. A. G. Pawar, "Shivaji and Ramdas", from *Studies in Maratha History*, Vol. 1, Shivaji University Publications, Kolhapur, 1971, pp. 191-204.

enforced spartan simplicity among its inhabitants. The distinguishing traits of the Maratha character are aptly summed up by Jadunath Sarkar. They are: "self-reliance, courage, perseverance, a stern simplicity, a rough straight-forwardness, self-respect, a sense of social equality and consequently pride in the dignity of man as man".⁹ These qualities of the Maratha character are graphically recorded by a foreign traveller, the Chinese Yuan Chwang, as early as in the middle of the seventh century. When these spirited people came under the magic spell of Shivaji with his extraordinary vision combined with an equal capacity for initiative and organisation, they responded splendidly to his call for Swarajya.

Another factor that contributed to Shivaji's phenomenal success in his nation-building activity was the existence of small centres of Maratha power scattered all over Maharashtra. Owing to the smallness of their numbers, the Muslim Powers of the Deccan had to leave much of their administration to the Hindus themselves. Some of these Hindus rose to high positions in both the civil and the military administrations of the Deccan Sultanates and were granted watans and jagirs commensurate to their status. Some of the Maratha Deshmukhs must have held watans even before the start of the Bahamani rule.

Thus, at the beginning of the 17th century there was a galaxy of Deshmukhs or Watandars—the Mores, the Shirkes, the Dalvis, the Jadhavs, the Nimbalkars, the Ghorpades, the Surves, the Sawants and others—who were practically independent of the ruling authorities. Of course, there was no love lost between these Watandars. They had not only remained separate, but separatism had become the key-note of their political behaviour. Their rivalries were so numerous, their feelings so hot, and their collisions so frequent, that for the sake of watan they were ever ready 'to do and die'.¹⁰ Shivaji shrewdly sought to convert the turbulent spirit and the intense love for the original patrimony of the Maval Deshmukhs into the larger and nobler cause of Swarajya by welding them into a single body politic. Those like the Mores who opposed him came in for severe punish-

9. J. N. Sarkar, *Shivaji and His Times*, 6th ed. Orient Longman Ltd., 1973, pp. 6-7.

10. *Ibid*, p. 10.

ment. The Ghorpades of Mudhol and the Manes of Mhaswad remained the faithful servants of Bijapur till the very end of that kingdom. The Sawants of Wadi yielded with reluctance to a superior force. It should therefore be noted that the old Maratha aristocracy contributed very little or practically nothing to the national movement until a later stage. It was the masses of Maharashtra, who suffered under these warring Deshmukhs and their overlords, the Muslim rulers of the Deccan, that hailed Shivaji as their deliverer and hero. It was these common folk of Maharashtra who constituted the real strength of Shivaji in his bid for Swarajya.¹¹

All these factors plus the two traditions coming down from the Yadavas of Devagiri and the Hindu Empire of Vijayanagara had prepared a psychological and moral background for the emergence of the Maratha nation. Shivaji's real work was to turn into one patriotic current all the available forces of the time—political, moral, religious, anti-foreign—to build up a politically independent Maratha State. The skill, tact and daring with which he mobilised these forces and co-ordinated them for the common purpose of the attainment of Swarajya mark him out as the outstanding genius of his time. Without his guiding genius, it is difficult to imagine how the Maratha political unity could have been achieved.

The clue to Shivaji's amazing success in establishing Swarajya on a firm basis is to be found in the combined effects of the following :

- (1) The pioneering work done by his father Shahaji.
- (2) Shivaji's clear vision. Right from the start he was clear in his mind of the ultimate objective of achieving political independence for himself and his people.
- (3) His ability to make a correct appreciation of the existing geo-political situation of Maharashtra and exploit it with consummate skill to attain the end in view.
- (4) His military genius. He adopted such strategy and employed such military tactics as were eminently suited to his purpose.

11. S. N. Sen, *The Military System of the Marathas*, Orient Longman, Bombay, 1958, p. 19; M. G. Ranade, *op. cit.*, p. 31; J. N. Sarkar, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

- (5) His total self-reliance and complete independence from any outside authority. Right from the very start he never recognised anyone as his suzerain. He was his own suzerain.
- (6) His capacity to harness the moral force which the people had derived from the preachings of the saints in the cause of the nation, by setting before them the grand ideal of Swarajya.
- (7) His success in securing the devotion of his people by good management and just administration.

In short, it was the excellence of Shivaji's versatile genius that made the dream of Swarajya a dazzling reality.

Shivaji did not start his work with a clean slate. Among the pioneers of the Maratha freedom movement, Shivaji's father Shahaji occupies an important place. Both directly and indirectly he contributed to the marvellous success of his gifted son in the foundation of Swarajya. He provided Shivaji with an impregnable base in the Western Ghats for his early operations. When Shahaji sent his young son Shivaji to take charge of his Jagir in Poona, it seems he consciously provided him with a cabinet worthy of an independent King. Shamrao Nilkanth Ranjhekai was appointed as the Peshwa (Prime Minister); Balkrishna Hanumante was Muzumdar (Accountant General); Sonaji Pant was Dabir (Secretary); and Raghunath Ballal was Sabnis (Paymaster). Besides these four trained and tried high-ranking officials, there was Dadaji Kondadev, a veteran administrator, who was charged with the duty and responsibility of guardian and tutor.¹²

Another direct inheritance of the son from the father was a grand lesson in strategy. As in Maharashtra, so also in Karnataka, Shahaji had made a chain of forts connected with a fortified port the basis of his power, so that he could escape by sea if overwhelmed on land. Shivaji adopted and perfected the same policy for his own self-defence and aggressive movements.¹³

Indirectly, Shahaji inspired his son by his own dignified conduct in his dealings with the Nizamshahs of Ahmednagar and the Adilshahs of Bijapur. With the Nizamshahi his role was

12. *Sabhasad Bakhar*, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

13. T. S. Shejwalkar, "The Geographic Factor in the History of Maharashtra" in *Shri Shiv Chhatrapati*, Maratha Mandir Prakashan, Bombay, 1964, p. 576.

that of a king-maker. When that kingdom was extinguished in 1636 by the joint action of the Mughals and the Adilshah of Bijapur, Shahaji was obliged to transfer his allegiance to the Court of Bijapur. But then he did two things, both of which proved to be of great significance in the history of Swarajya. Firstly, he insisted on and retained his Jagir in Poona, which subsequently became the cradle of Swarajya. Secondly, he consented to move off to the far south, away from court intrigues, to find a new career of semi-independence. He acquired considerable territory in Karnataka. Later, Shivaji Maharaj strove hard to bring it into his own possession and named it "Swarajya", which significantly served as a place of refuge to the third Maratha King, Rajaram, in the hour of his distress.

An authentic letter dated 6th July 1657 from Shahaji to Adilshah provides a clue as to how Shivaji got his main inspiration for undertaking the difficult experiment of establishing Swarajya. Among other things, Shahaji writes :

I must remind your Majesty that I am a Rajput by race and will therefore never brook disgrace or disfavour while performing my duties to your Majesty. I have served four different Courts till now, but never have I suffered indignities on any account..... If your Majesty therefore wants my services in the future, I demand that my status be restored to its former height; if I am not required, Your Majesty had better at once relieve me. After all this, I have no desire now to go in for any ambitious pursuits in search of fortune. I will retire to a sacred place of the Hindus and will serve there my Almighty Master and ever pray for Your Majesty.¹⁴

This document provides a commentary upon the character and ability of Shahaji.

There is yet another valuable document which distinctly proves how Shivaji had the blessings of his father in his bid for Swarajya. It is a letter by Shivaji to his father in about 1664 informing him how he avenged the wrongs done by Baji Ghorpade, and of his success in that campaign against Khawas Khan, Sawant of Wadi

14. *Shivaji Souvenir*, Tercentenary Celebration, Bombay, (ed.) G. S. Sardesai, Bombay, 3rd May 1927, pp. 238-41.

and the Portuguese. What is important for our purpose is quoted here. Writes Shivaji :

I have just received your letter blessing me in the following words: "By the Grace of God, I got over the difficulty, Kind Providence having given you the strength to fight for Swarajya and religion.....God Shiva and Goddess Amba are always your protectors and will, I am sure, give you victory. You must avenge all the previous wrongs on this occasion: I bless you, my worthy son".¹⁵

It is true that Shahaji did not have the clear conception of Swarajya which his gifted son had. But it must be admitted that Shahaji, in his own humble way, did serve the noble cause of Swarajya which his great son made the mission of his life. The eternal gratitude of the son to his father is imperishably inscribed in Shivaji's seal :

प्रतिपञ्चद्वरेखे व विश्ववंदिता ।

शाहसुनोः शिवस्येषा मुद्रा भद्राय राजते ॥

That Shivaji had a clear conception of Swarajya, right from the start of his career, is proved by the letter he wrote to Dadaji Naras Prabhu Deshpande of Rohidkhore on 17th April 1645 Invoking Lord Rohiresvar, Shivaji writes :

त्याणी आम्हास यश दिल्हे व पुढे तो सर्व मनोरथ

हिंद्वी स्वराज्य करून पुरविणार आहे

हे राज्य व्हावे हे श्रींचे मनांत फार आहे.

(It is God Rohiresvar that has given us victory; and that God would enable us to fulfil our wish of *Hindavi Swarajya*. It is God's will that this kingdom should be established.)

The memorable phrase "Hindavi Swarajya" appears for the first time in this historic letter.

Some scholars following Rajwade have expressed a doubt regarding the authenticity of this letter. Referring to this and two other letters in the same series, Rajwade says "मतलब खरा पण पत्र अविश्वसनीय". (The contents are true, but the letter is unreliable.) S. N. Joshi in a scholarly work, *Arvachin Maharashtrastratihaskalatil Rajyakarbhara Abhyas*, says that we need not doubt the authenticity of such letters simply because

15. *Ibid*, pp. 144-5.

those who wrote them out might have made some mistakes in transcribing certain words.¹⁶ D. V. Kale in his learned biography of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj included this letter among the credible ones.¹⁷ Notwithstanding the authenticity or otherwise of this letter, the independent stand which Shivaji took right from the beginning of his political career is proof enough that he had a clear conception of Swarajya.

Shivaji had received from his father a small jagir bounded by the rivers Bhima and Nira in the Poona district. Making it his base, Shivaji cautiously proceeded to accomplish his noblest mission of establishing Swarajya. In this his mother's role was certainly the most decisive. It was Jijamata who moulded his mind and consciously and diligently prepared him for his historic role. Throughout his life, she was his constant source of inspiration and courage in everything that he did for the sake of Swarajya. She was his living deity; indeed, "she was his living Bhavani".¹⁸

At the time of Shivaji's appearance on the scene, Deccan politics were in a state of turmoil. Of the three surviving dynasties of the old Bahamani dominion, the Nizamshahi kingdom, which formed the major part of Maharashtra, was extinguished in 1636, and its territory was divided between the Mughals and the Adilshah. And although in outward appearance the Adilshahi of Bijapur still looked imposing, in reality it had become decrepit and was tottering to its fall, owing partly to its own internal dissensions and partly to the Mughal onslaughts. It is at this point that young Shivaji, seeing his opportunity, entered on the ingenious, daring and systematic course of liberating his country from the Mahomedan yoke. As Owen puts it: "Never was a great revolution begun more quietly and unostentatiously. A movement which was to pervade and convulse all India took its rise, like one of these Dekkan rivers (so to speak), in a corner, and in the bosom of the hills".¹⁹

16. S. N. Joshi, *Arvachin Maharashtraithaskalatil Rajyakarbharacha Abhyas*, Pune Vidyapith Prakashan, 1959, p. 130.
17. D. V. Kale, *Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj*, 3rd ed., Poona University, 1971, pp. 251-2.
18. *Sabhasad Bakhar*, *op. cit.*, p. 14; S. N. Joshi, *op. cit.*, p. 104; M. G. Ranade, *op. cit.*, pp. 27-28; S. R. Sharma, *op. cit.*, pp. 138-9.
19. S. J. Owen, *The Fall of the Mogul Empire*, John Murray, London, 1912, p. 57.

The nature and geographical situation of the Maratha country played a vital role in the consummation of Shivaji's grand scheme. The homeland of the Mavles is a conglomerate of rugged mountains and deep valleys, difficult of access. The Maval country in Western Maharashtra had never really been subjugated by any Muslim power of the Deccan, in the sense that the Desh was. Here then was Nature, out to favour the brave. It was here that young Shivaji first won the hearts of his fellow countrymen by his great personal charm and magnetic personality. The brilliant image that he projected as a just ruler of the Maval region soon spread far and wide throughout Maharashtra. This historic land not only provided Shivaji with a strong base but also with his most trusted lieutenants such as Baji Pasalkar, Yesaji Kank, Tanaji Malusare and others, who all became the pillars of his strength in his struggle for Swarajya. Truly, "the Maval country was the cradle of Shivaji's power and the Mavles formed the backbone of his army".²⁰

During his boyhood, Shivaji had the good fortune of having Dadaji Kondadev, a conscientious and able administrator, as his tutor, and also as the manager of his father's jagir. Dadaji looked after the interests of his young master with honesty and integrity. He brought order out of virtual chaos in the Maval country. He bestowed peace on its much harassed inhabitants by bringing to submission the turbulent and warring Deshmukhs and by introducing wise civil administration and revenue reforms. Thus he gave a good start to Shivaji's great career. No doubt, Shivaji's superb conduct of the administration of Swarajya was essentially due to his own creative genius; but the early lessons in the art of government which he received from Dadaji must have made deep impressions on his receptive mind. Brought up in the tradition of the old school, Dadaji could not however rise to the height of Shivaji's lofty ideal of Swarajya. In fact, he was at times terribly distressed at the unconventional behaviour of his revolutionary ward. But it must be said in defence of the good old man that when he realised that Shivaji was both earnest and capable of creating a new order, he wholeheartedly blessed him.

Shivaji inaugurated his momentous journey towards independence

20. J. N. Sarkar, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

with the capture of Torna (1646) and successfully completed it with his coronation at Raigad in 1674. His career during this period is indeed a romance of history. The remaining six years of his life were mainly devoted to the consolidation of Swarajya and adding to its territory by making fresh conquests in the far south.

The grand exploits of Shivaji are too well-known to be repeated here. We may just touch on those principal events in his career which form milestones in the rise and fulfilment of Swarajya. He began his independent career by capturing old forts and building new ones, and enforcing his authority judiciously but firmly in his father's jagir. The acquisition of Javali from the Mores forms the next landmark (1656). Three years later, through sheer personal valour he scored a brilliant victory over the boasting Bijapuri Sardar, Afzal Khan, and thoroughly exposed the pretensions of the Adilshahi might (10th November 1659). The very next year, he succeeded in fooling the enemy at Panhala (13th July 1660). Thereafter he did not have any appreciable resistance from Bijapur. His first serious encounter with the mighty Mughals ended in the utter humiliation of Shaista Khan, Mughal viceroy of the Deccan (1663). These and the many other incredibly daring feats of Shivaji struck terror into the hearts of all his rivals, and at the same time firmly established his reputation as a born leader, intrepid soldier and grand strategist. A realist to the core, Shivaji next made a friendly compromise with Jaisingh by signing the treaty of Purandar (1665), and upon his advice visited the Mughal court at Agra (May 1666) and used this opportunity to study the condition of the Mughal Darbar. His dramatic escape from captivity is nothing short of a miracle.

Back at home, he devoted his first three years to the internal administration of his kingdom, and thereafter continued his career of uninterrupted conquest, and in 1674 had himself crowned Chhatrapati at Raigad. The Rajyabhishek which took place on 6th June 1674 was only the grand culmination of a unique career which evoked the admiration and wonder of one and all, including his political enemies. After having established himself as sovereign over Maharashtra, Shivaji Maharaj turned his attention to Karnataka. His conquests in the far south, which he made an integral part of Swarajya, form the last phase of his glorious career.

From a small jagir of his father's from Junnar to Supa, Shivaji extended his Raj from the Arabian Sea in the West to the river Bhima in the East, and from the Godavari in the North to the Kaveri in the South. This he achieved in the teeth of the opposition of the Mughal Empire, then at the height of its power, and of Bijapur, Golkonda, the Portuguese in Goa, and the Siddis of Janjira, not to speak of numerous other small chieftains. In this and in several other respects, Shivaji stands alone and unique in the whole of Indian history.²¹

No doubt the compact kingdom of Shivaji Maharaj was not very large in physical extent, but the real glory and greatness of Swarajya was essentially due to the ideals for which it stood, and the principles by which it was governed by its great founder. Ramchandrapant Amatya, who accurately reflects the political mind of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj in his *Ajanapatra ani Rajaniti*, provides us with a clear idea of the essential features of the grand polity of Swarajya.

The cardinal principles of Shivaji's administration of Swarajya were :

- i) To promote the well-being of his people and the general welfare of the State.
- ii) To maintain an efficient military force to defend Swarajya.
- iii) To provide adequately for the economic needs of the people by encouraging agriculture and industry.

As Jadunath Sarkar has correctly described it, "Shivaji's domination spread first of all through the conquest of hearts which the honest and strong administrator alone can achieve among a simple rustic population".²² His truly paternalistic approach, his strong sense of justice and genuine concern for the welfare of his people made an intense appeal to the people of Maharashtra.²³ They looked up to him as their liberator, emancipator and protector. The unbounded admiration which the

21. A. B. de Braganca Pereira (ed.), *Marathyanchya Itihasachi Sadhane* (Originally in Portuguese), translated into Marathi by S. S. Desai Vishvakosh Karyalaya, Wai, Government of Maharashtra, 1968, pp. 1-2.

22. J. N. Sarkar, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

23. S. N. Sen, *Foreign Biographies of Shivaji*, (Source : Comse da Guarda, *Life of the Celebrated Sevagi*), The Book Company, Calcutta, 1927, pp. 50-52; 154.

masses had for their beloved hero constituted Shivaji's real strength in founding Swarajya.

Shivaji was a pious Hindu and a great devotee of the Goddess Bhavani, but his piety was a purely personal affair. When it came to the affairs of the State and the welfare of his subjects, whether Hindu, Muslim or Christian, he never allowed religious considerations to affect his State policy. He appointed a number of Muslims to high positions of trust and responsibility in the civil as well as in the military establishment. How greatly he respected Islam and its followers is borne out by evidence from no less a person than his worst critic Khafi Khan, the celebrated historian of the Emperor Aurangzeb.²⁴

Swarajya could hardly have been founded without the military genius of Shivaji. He was a born military leader. He thoroughly understood the geographic factor in military tactics. For the protection of Swarajya he made the hillforts along the Sahyadri Ghats his main line of defence. With sound military instinct he created a marvellous second line of defence in the Kaveri valley, to which he could retire in an emergency. Realising that it would not be possible for a power to dominate the Deccan without a strong navy of its own, he created the Maratha Navy.²⁵ He kept his army in constant readiness by providing all essentials and enforcing exemplary discipline.²⁶ He developed an extremely mobile mode of warfare, avoided pitched battles, and adopted guerrilla tactics which eminently suited the genius of the Maratha people. He had the divine gift of judging character at sight and choosing the right man for the right job.²⁷ Above all, not by precept but by personal example, he inspired all who had the privilege to serve under his command.

The concept of an economically prosperous and flourishing people was ever present in Shivaji's ideal of Swarajya. He knew that the first duty of a ruler is to make his people prosper. In a paper entitled *The Economic Policy of Shivaji*, presented at a Seminar

24. Elliot & Dowson, *The History of India As Told By Its Own Historians*, Vol. VII, (Khafi Khan's *Muntakhab-ul-Lubab*), Kitab Mahal, Allahabad, 1964, p. 260.

25. T. S. Shejwalkar, *op. cit.*, p. 576.

26. In this connection Shivaji's letter dated 19th May, 1673 to his officers is very revealing : *Shivaji Souvenir*, pp. 150-52.

27. J. N. Sarkar, *op. cit.*, p. 385.

held in the S. N. D. T. University, Bombay, Dr. A. R. Kulkarni of Poona University has rightly pointed out that "Shivaji, the founder of the Maratha nation, strove throughout his life to make his state economically a viable unit".²⁸ The way Shivaji protected the tillers of the soil and encouraged agriculture which formed the backbone of Maharashtra's economy, the keen interest that he showed in developing trade, commerce and industry in his dominions, and the various judicious measures that he took to augment the state finances, clearly prove that Shivaji had a sound sense of national economy.

Thus, not only did Shivaji found Swarajya, but he placed it on a stable and solid foundation. The splendid achievement of Shivaji Maharaj is brilliantly summed up by Ramchandrapant Amatya in a single sentence : "केवळ नूतन सृष्टीच निर्माण केली".²⁹ (He created an altogether new order of things.)

What does 'Swarajya' signify to us? The coming of Swarajya opened a new and glorious chapter in Indian history, written by the genius of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. The imperishable achievement of Shivaji's life was to breathe into his fellow-countrymen a spirit of self-reliance and independence.³⁰ The resolute passion for independence which he kindled in the bosom of his people is the most precious legacy of his Swarajya to modern India. The grand lesson that he gave us in patriotism is something unique and eternal. Among his other great gifts were peace and beneficent administration. When we view his total performance, especially against the socio-political background of his times, this sovereign of Maharashtra stands comparison with any of the greatest nation-builders and benevolent rulers of the world.

The impact of Swarajya on Indian history has been a decisive factor in later events. The national revolt that Shivaji so ably and so very successfully led against foreign domination ever continued to inspire the best minds of succeeding generations. Right

28. A. R. Kulkarni, *The Economic Policy of Shivaji* (cyclostyled paper dated 23rd February, 1974).

29. *Hukumarpansa Ramachandrapant Amatya Yanche Ajnapatra ani Rajaniti* (eds). S. N. Joshi & L. M. Bhingare, Continental Prakashan, Poona, 1960, p. 6.

30. James Grant Duff, *A History of the Mahrattas*, Vol. I, Longman et al., London, 1826, p. 300 ; J. N. Sarkar, *op. cit.*, p. 388.

from the Maratha War of Independence (1689-1707) to India's struggle for freedom, every great national movement has drawn inspiration from the life and deeds of Shivaji.

In spite of his best efforts and enormous resources, Aurangzeb failed against the Marathas because "he was totally unable to appreciate their higher moral characteristics; the resolute passion for national independence which their leader had kindled in their bosoms; their intense devotion to the memory, the example, and the institutions of their heroic and indomitable chief; and the confidence which he had imparted to them that the Imperial power, so far from being irresistible, was extremely vulnerable, and if persistently assailed on his method, might be brought low in the end".³¹ The successful Maratha War of Independence against Aurangzeb was the vindication of the national spirit that Shivaji had so assiduously cultivated among his people.

Many a soldier and leader of the Indian Revolt of 1857 against the British Raj was inspired by the memory of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. The leaders of the nineteenth century Indian Renaissance like Nyayamurti Ranade looked back to the resurgent Maharashtra of Shivaji's making, for their guidance and inspiration.

"Swaraj is my birth right and I shall have it", declared Lokmanya Tilak, who started Shivaji Utsav to stimulate Indian nationalism against British rule, perhaps only an echo of what that great master and maker of the Maratha nation had said as early as the year 1645.

शिवराजाचें आठवावें रूप । शिवराजाचा आठवावा साक्षेप ।
शिवराजाचा आठवावा प्रताप । भूमंडळी ॥

31. S. J. Owen, *op. cit.*, p. 90.

The Significance of the Coronation

S. R. TIKEKAR

The entire Hindu world has rejoiced, as never before, in three or four great events in recent times. The Coronation of Chhatrapati Shivaji 300 years back is, of course, the first of them; and the second place can be given to the installation of the Shrine-*eternal* of Somnath after we became free. About the third, there are likely to be two opinions, but unanimity can be achieved by taking the two together as one big event. The completion of the *History of Dharmasastra*, which is in fact a cyclopaedia of Hinduism, by Mahamahopadhyaya P. V. Kane, is one event and the other is the completion of the critical edition of the *Mahabharata* with international cooperation. These then are the events that have had a continuous and cumulative effect of happiness and satisfaction on the Hindu mind.

Shivaji, son of Shahaji Bhonsale, was crowned *Chhatrapati*; and Gaga (also known as Vishveshvar), son of Dinkar Bhatt had come all the way from Benares to officiate as the royal priest. Any other Brahmin would not have served the purpose, and it is doubtful whether anyone had come forward to take up the responsibility. For one thing, there was no information about a function of that magnitude in the living memory of the local priests. It was doubtful if even their grandfathers had heard of a coronation. For another, the difficulties of undertaking such a function in the case of Shivaji, according to small minds expert in making out a case why a proposal cannot and should not be accepted, were: (i) the Kshatriya origin of the Bhonsales had to be established, (ii) adequate expiation for the lapse of many years without an *upanayana* had to be made, and the ceremony performed at that late stage, and (iii) marriages had to be performed according to Vedic rites (with the same wives). Each of these points was knotty enough to be decided only by the Pandits of Kashi, which was the place of appeal in all such cases.

Gaga's willingness to undertake the entire responsibility

shows his sterling merits and his confidence in his capacity to plan out the details of a ritual that had not happened in living memory. That master-mind was able to devise the 10-day ceremony in all its functional and ritualistic aspects and to lay down the modus operandi in a clear-cut and easily understood way for the local Brahmins to follow. Needless to say, such a performance was quite impressive to the local priests, and they bowed down before the authority of the learned pandit from Benares. In implicitly following him and his instructions in the ceremonial ritual, they paid their tribute to his standing in the priestly world.

In thus shouldering the responsibility of the Coronation, it was obvious that Gaga had found solutions for all the three knotty problems which stood in the way of Shivaji's rising to the throne to occupy it in his own right. How he did it, and under what authority from the Dharmashastras, can best be judged from a battle royal that went on between two stalwarts, each worthy of salutations from one and all in the academic world. The way in which Gaga overcame the hurdle of the lapse of many years without an upanayana was not quite justified, according to a brilliant scholar and judge of the Bombay High Court, Justice K. T. Telang. He was not able to find support for Gaga's action under the circumstances. Justice Telang complained that Shivaji had already been married eight times before being crowned; his son was already married at the time. To make amends at such a late stage in life, for all these years of lapse from performing the thread ceremony, was too much for Justice Telang to condone. So his outburst was expressed in strong words:

..... The thread ceremony essential for a Kshatriya was performed on Shivaji at a time when he was forty-six or fifty years old and had already had two sons—an irregularity which also was, we are told, expressly assented to by all the Brahmins and Pandits. How the Brahmins and Pandits worked their way to this decision, none of our authorities states. Further, it is remarkable that none of those authorities anywhere mentions the performance of the thread ceremony upon any of the members of Shivaji's

family, except the ones who were installed on the gadi.¹ So this judicial giant, another intellectual giant, Dr. P. V. Kane, has given a fitting reply :

Mr. Justice Telang writes rather like a judge than like a scholar or a historian. The judge has to give a decision on the evidence adduced by the parties before him. It is no part of his business to collect evidence for himself. But the role of a historian is entirely different. He must not only try to read all the evidence available till the time he writes; but he must himself ferret out all possible evidence and make searches in places where evidence is likely to be found. Above all, he must be cautious in his condemnations of persons long dead, on the strength of the meagre evidence read by him.

Mr. Telang wrote the paper above referred to in 1892, but long before that, *Paraskar* (in 1892) and *Apastamba* (in 1886) had been translated and published in the *Sacred Books of the East* series. But he, though a great judge and also a great Sanskrit scholar, nowhere shows that he had cared to see whether shastric rules allowed the Upanayana of a man himself at any age whatever after some penance.

If he had seen those rules, he would not have unjustly taken to task Pandits that flourished 200 years before him and attributed irregular motives to them. It does not appear that he made any search in the archives of Udaipur durbar to see how Shivaji traced his descent from the Sisodia clan nor does it appear that he even went to Mudhol and other places in Maharashtra where ancient Maratha families have been holding sway for centuries.²

Here then you have a battle of wits at the highest intellectual level. The historian of the Dharmashastra has of course the last word and we must take him as the final authority. That shows what a controversial decision Gaga had taken in the interests of the people of the times; and such a step was possible only because of his towering stature.

1. M. G. Ranade, *Rise of the Maratha Power*, Govt. of India ed., Delhi, 1961, p. 130.

2. P. V. Kane, *History of Dharmashastra* Vol. II, Part I, Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona, p. 379-80, footnote No. 923.

It was a firm belief of the Hindus that in the Kaliyuga there was no Kshatriya living, which meant that no Hindu could be a real king. Raja as an honorary title, many sardars could have; but a throne and a coronation were far beyond their reach.

Kingship was equated with a divine authority; it was not the divine right of kings as understood in Europe. This was a firm belief that a ruler, a crowned king, was like a God. The exact saying is: ना विष्णुः पृथिवीपतिः literally meaning that only Vishnu can be the Lord of the Earth (King). Kingship meant sharing the mastery over the earth; and the earth as Bhu Devi is the second wife of Vishnu, the first being Lakshmi. Hence a king shares the lordship over the earth with Vishnu. To be able to be a peer of Vishnu, you must belong to the Kshatriya class, and in the Kaliyuga that class did not exist.

Be that as it may, the conditions of the times were such as made another coronation necessary, and it was under the guidance of Nischalpuri that it was carried out. Here the Mantric and Tantric—but not Vedic—rituals dominated. The difference between the two indicates clearly the local prejudices which were firmly embedded in the public mind. Even the greatest authority of Gaga from Benares did not prove impressive before them. Hence Nischalpuri's effort of appeasing the local gods. This is neither the place nor the occasion to go into the disputed point of the Vedic versus the Mantric type of coronation. In Maratha social life, the controversy has raged over many years and it is known as the Vedokta Prakarana. For the purposes of our topic it is enough to note that there were two coronations: one to establish that Shivaji belonged to the Kshatriya clan and that he could be crowned a Chhatrapati and the other to show that he was not entitled to the Vedic form of recitations at the time of the coronation.

It must then be taken as a progressive acceptance on the part of Nischalpuri that he approved of the proposal of Gaga to have Shivaji crowned; the way of crowning may be different. But that Shivaji was considered worthy to be crowned was quite a welcome and reformist attitude. But what does a coronation really mean? What constituted its full performance?

Actually, from the term employed in the Dharmashastras, the coronation of a King is a ceremonial bath, an abhisheka.

Whether a crown was actually used or not in India, we do not know. The reference to patta (in patabhisheka, patta-rani) is there, and out of fifteen different meanings of the word, one does signify a head-dress, which may be considered as a sort of a crown. In one book it is mentioned that the length of the patta should be twice the breadth at the centre and this does indicate that it was a broad head-dress. In many stage-plays even today the royal figures appear with a silken broad cloth round the head. That again is according to a meaning of the word patta.

The King is considered the protector of the earth; in fact he is wedded to her, and hence becomes a part of Vishnu whose second wife is Bhu Devi, the earth.

According to the English custom, the sceptre and the crown seem to be the symbols of royalty. According to the Hindu custom, chamara and chhatra are the inseparable emblems of royalty. Chamara is the fly-whisk made from the tail of the wild cows of Nepal (Chamari; hence, केशेषु चमरी हन्ति । i. e. the wild cows are killed for the sake of their hair), and chhatra, a royal umbrella. The danda is also mentioned; but it is to be carried by others, not by the King. The chamara and chhatra also are carried by others. Only the patta, whatever it may mean, is put on the head or forehead by the king.

According to the Islamic custom, the morchel and mahimaratbat were the insignia of royalty. A morchel was a bunch of peacock tails held on one side of the person, while he occupied his exalted seat. On the other side was the flag with the figures of a fish.

The coronation of a Hindu King meant that he undertook to rule the country and its people according to the dictates of Dharma. What he had to do was to observe Dharma so that the people were protected and that they were happy; thus the earth too was happy and prosperous. It is interesting how the texts of the various authorities are unanimous on this point. In the happiness of the people, the kings sought their own happiness. At one place, the *Mahabharata* asks the king to follow the way of the would-be-mother. As she is very careful about the well-being of the child unborn, so also should the king be careful that he guards the interests of the people entrusted to his care. Was

it a chance coincidence or was it by plan, that those very sentiments found a place in Queen Victoria's Proclamation, issued as she took over the empire of India under her care ?

In their prosperity will be our strength; in their contentment our security, and in their gratitude our best reward.

The Hindu ceremony of instituting authority in an icon or an idol has its counterpart in human relations also. The ruler had to be properly instituted with authority to be able to rule. Without such a ceremony, his writ had difficulty in being honoured and respected. With the investiture of authority, i. e. after the coronation, the ruler was within his right when he issued this order or that. He had the full judicial authority to pronounce capital punishment, even as a king had the inherent right to grant pardon in such extreme cases.

The need for such a ceremonial function will be realised only after appreciating the scale of gradation, into which the people were divided; and gradation was the hall-mark of Hindu society. Thus the Mores of Javli considered themselves far superior to the Bhonsales. Why? The reason may sound ridiculous; but even as seniority in service counts for much in government, one need not laugh at the Mores, who considered themselves superior to the Bhonsales on the strength of the family's far longer service under the Adilshahi. By the coronation, the Bhonsales were at once raised to the highest place in the social scale. According to one authority on Shivaji's times, some of the Brahmans were not so willing to obey Shivaji's orders, and they considered him not to be a constituted authority for dispensing justice in social or other disputes. To satisfy such doubting Thomases, it was necessary to have a regularising ceremony—the coronation—performed as soon as possible. It is pertinent to note that among the expiations which Shivaji underwent before being formally crowned, there was one for a possible Brahma-hatya (death of a Brahmin) by one who was already a grand hero of many battles.

What then were the responsibilities of a king crowned according to the Dharmashastras? What did the coronation signify? Rajadharma enjoined on the kings to undertake to govern according to dictates, not of his own but of Dharma. And that Dharma was as old as man.

न वै राज्यं न राजासीम्न च दंडो न दांडिकः ।
धर्मेणैव प्रजाः सर्वा रक्षति स्म परस्परम् ॥

(When there was neither king nor kingdom, no punishment nor punishing authority, [under such conditions] the people protected themselves [by mutual cooperation] by observing Dharma.)

A crowned king has to respect the dictates of such a Dharma, which assures full protection to all the people. It is common knowledge that the king as a ruler was entitled only to a sixth of the total produce of the land, which comes to a little more than 16%. So the ancient texts fully regulated the powers of the Sovereign, although he was equated with Vishnu, thus firmly establishing the overriding supremacy of Dharma.

For these reasons, the coronation had established the Hindu Dharma firmly at a time when it was believed to be on the wane. Historians call the function epoch making because it does mark the beginning of a new, bright and hopeful era. That is also why the Raja Shaka, a new era, was introduced from the day of the coronation.

The people were not expecting anyone from among themselves to be a king in his own right. But they were prepared to accept any Sultan or even a Siddi as a ruler on par with Vishnu ! It did not matter to them at all that the ruler was anti-Hindu in spirit and deed.

Shahaji, for instance, was virtually a king-maker; he carried the infant Nizamshah in his lap. The thought of having a throne for himself never crossed his mind. Similarly, many Maratha sardars knew full well that this or that Sultanate depended on their valour and swordsmanship. Yet they never desired a throne for themselves. Their loyalty even to the weak occupant of the throne was exemplary. They were more loyal than the king !

It was a curious mind that believed that there were no kshatriyas living and therefore the Hindus could not be kings, but at the same time felt that any chance comer who could usurp the throne by hook or crook was entitled to be respected by the people. It was this utter humility to and full dependence on the Sultans that Shivaji revolted against. He wanted his countrymen to be free and self-respecting.

Reverting back to Gaga and his grand ceremonial, we note with an unusual satisfaction that the royal function as outlined by him was in full accordance with similar ceremonies as described in the *Ramayana* or the *Mahabharata*. Coronations had become quite unusual in those days and Gaga could only depend on the details as mentioned in the epics. He must be complimented for his wise vision and his uncommon boldness in acting up to that vision.

Another contemporary pandit, the poet Bhushan, has observed: "If there were no Shivaji, all India would have been converted to Islam". This then is the answer to the question about the significance of the Coronation. "If there were no Shivaji", is the poet's way of saying, "if there were no coronation and if there were no Chhatrapati", because Shivaji and his coronation are inseparables. When two cultures, the Hindu and Islamic, were together in close juxtaposition, with a powerful Islamic ruler at the top, there was always the fear of total disappearance of the other.

In the present secular state of the Republic of India, we may not be in a position to appreciate adequately what the coronation meant to the then Hindu mind. We have seldom considered why most of the historical Marathi papers that have been printed so far invariably bear dates according to the Islamic calendar. It is not yet adequately realised that Marathi vocabulary generally and that of diplomacy in particular, is overladen with Persian-Arabic words and expressions. All this has happened because of the dominant position which Islam enjoyed during many centuries. To a dominated people, the Coronation was an act of deliverance, bringing great hope and cheer. Shivaji by his coronation preserved this aspect of Hinduism for centuries.

We are grateful to both Shivaji and Gaga for this epoch-making coronation, which was performed at Raigad just 300 years back.

The Ideals and Institutions of Swarajya

CHIDAMBARA KULKARNI

At the outset I must state that my study of Shivaji and the Marathas has been a part of my study of Indian history. Therefore I am compelled to present Shivaji, his ideals, institutions and achievements in the context of the long and fascinating history of our motherland and to emphasize the significance of Shivaji as a great champion, a dauntless defender, an untiring carrier-forward of the torch of the immortal values and traditions of our ancient heritage.

History, according to the Indian tradition, is the unfolding of the human values symbolised by the term purushartha consisting of dharma, artha, kama and moksha. As these values are too well-known, I do not desire to elaborate on their meaning and significance. However, I want to bring to your notice that:

The Indian life and culture, in all their myriad facets of religion, philosophy, ethics, literature, social organisation and traditions of art and architecture, have their secure roots in purushartha alone. A long procession of poets, philosophers, teachers, saints, law-givers and historians from the earliest age to this day have endeavoured to explain these universal values and have enjoined our people to strive for their realization in life. Purushartha, therefore, is the criterion of our history. An objective study of Indian history is possible only when we bear this in mind. Then alone we can discover the meaning and message of our heritage. The message of our history is Universal Harmony. Indeed if one were to sum up the dominant theme that runs through Indian history in one word, it is samanvaya or harmony—harmony between the individual and the society, between the ruler and the ruled, between the nation and the universe, between action and knowledge, between the material and the spiritual, between earth and heaven, and

not less significant, the harmony among the various castes, communities, creeds and faiths, gods and goddesses. Any meaningful interpretation of the events, personalities, traditions and institutions has to project itself from this basic fact.¹

And the study of Shivaji's ideals and institutions cannot be an exception to this.

Students of Indian history can proudly recall to their minds the glorious periods when our ancestors reached great heights in various fields of life and culture by faithfully adhering to these values. We are also painfully aware of the periods of distress when departure from the accepted and well-tried tenets led to considerable disorder and chaos in our society and state. Precisely during such critical periods, there emerged great men—thinkers, saints, rulers—who succeeded in restoring faith and order and set the pace for progress. In fact Indian history is made up of a continuous series of renaissance movements.

Shivaji appeared during one such distressing period. He was a product of the age of conflict. He imbibed into himself the spirit of renaissance. He understood the will of his age, put it into words and deeds and accomplished it. In Hegelian terms, what Shivaji did was the heart and essence of his age; he actualised his age. His ideals evolved as he grew; he established the institutions that reflected and facilitated the realization of these ideals. To understand fully the ideals of Shivaji and his swarajya, we have to look into his heritage, contemporary political and socio-cultural environment, the influences that moulded his personality, his own utterances and announcements, his coronation, his patronage of religion and scholarship and his creative struggle from the very beginning of his career to invest his polity with the spirit and form of dharmarajya. Such a study alone can help us to grasp fully the significance of Shivaji's exploits, and policies and his mission in life, which was to lift up his people and weld them into a nation of strong, upright and valiant defenders of our precious heritage.

To begin with, it is well to remember that Shivaji, as everyone else in the Deccan and the South, was an heir to the glorious

1. Chidambara Kulkarni, *Vedic Foundations of Indian Culture*, Shri Dvaipayana Trust, 1973, p. 66-7.

heritage of the Vijayanagara empire founded with the avowed purpose of defending the Hindu Dharma. Inspired and blessed by the great sage Vidyaranya, this great citadel of Vedic culture soon grew to be one of the most glorious empires in the world. Its impact on the course of Indian history and culture has been unique. Its abrupt collapse in 1565 was a national disaster and naturally lingered long in the minds of all patriots. The impact of Vijayanagara on Shivaji is seen in some of the dominant traits of his character. T. S. Shejwalkar points out that the great Maratha leader absorbed the spirit of Vijayanagara and this could be seen in Shivaji's

voraciousness in imbibing Hindu scriptures; his punctiliousness in following the tenets of the Hindu religion; his enthusiasm in attending, when possible, the religious sermons; his humble submission to the religious preceptors; his generosity in endowing the edifices of God and the Brahmanical seats of learning; his faithfulness in proceeding, at great inconvenience and risk sometimes, to the shrines of deities to perform religious rites and offer devotion; and last but not least, his religious frenzies and his secret communion with the goddess Bhavani; all these speak of the man Shivaji and bear witness to the make-up of his mind.²

Further, Shejwalkar believes that the atmosphere in Maharashtra was not congenial to the arousal of such religious fervour; Shivaji could, in all possibility, have absorbed these features during his stay at Bangalore with his esteemed father, Shahaji. But historians are not unanimous on this point. Indeed, the correct sequence of facts of Shivaji's early life is yet to be fixed beyond doubt. However, what is relevant to our discussion is that Shivaji most certainly imbibed the spirit and zeal of Vijayanagara and it does not matter much whether he absorbed it at his father's court or from his learned tutors, who could not have totally missed the significance of the great empire which had collapsed not more than a century earlier, and which was still struggling to exist in the South. Shejwalkar asserts :

2. T. S. Shejwalkar, *Vijayanagara Sexcentenary Commemoration Volume*, Vijayanagara Empire Sexcentenary Association, Dharwar, 1936, pp. 129-30.

We can take it almost for certain that Sivaji's mind had become full of tales of Vijayanagara, of the exploits of its heroes and the cultural work of its learned men like Vidyaranya. The fame of 'Rama Raja Kanada' and the historic battle of 'Rakshastagdi' had spread far and wide in Maharashtra, as we can judge by the existence of Marathi Bakhars on the subject and the casual mention of his name elsewhere.

..... Subjectively speaking, it seems clear to us that Sivaji's ideal was formed in the shadow of Vijayanagara.³

That Shivaji aspired to stand forth as the successor to the great Vijayanagara empire is revealed in his later conquest of the Karnataka territory, his adoption of the Vijayanagara coin, the honnu, his modelling the governmental machinery on the Hindu pattern, his patronage of Vedic scholarship, his coronation and his dedication of the Kingdom to Ramdas. In brief, the Swarajya was, as S. R. Sharma puts it, the continuation of the Vijayanagara Samrajya.

It is desirable to note in this context that Maharashtra and Karnataka have been, since time immemorial, identical in culture, religion, deities, society, food, dress, language and literature. The close cultural affinity was maintained during the period of our study by the movement of troops, saints, scholars and traders up and down the entire Deccan and the South. The chosen deity of the Maharashtrians, Vitthal, was carried to Vijayanagara for safe-keeping and brought back to Pandharpur when the situation became favourable. It is well-known that Vitthal is described as Kanadavu, his place as Karanataka. The social and religious movement launched by the saints of Maharashtra was again the continuation of the movements initiated by the Alvars, the Nayanars, the Shivasaranas and the Dasas.

This is a convenient stage for passing on to a brief review of the nature of the bhakti movement and assessing its impact on the contemporary society and possibly on Shivaji. Jnanadev was the first and foremost of the Maharashtrian saints. He brought the sacred knowledge within the reach of the humblest and thus ushered in the era of democracy in religion. That

3. T. S. Shejwalkar, *op.cit.*, p. 129.

there were as many as five hundred and more saints in Maharashtra during the five centuries that followed the age of Jnanadev speaks for the tremendous vitality of the movement as well as its tenacity. These propagators of the Bhagavat Dharma were acutely conscious of the miseries of the people and the oppressive rule of the mlenchhas. We may confine ourselves to the study of the conditions of the period as revealed in the writings of some of the prominent saints. Namdev for example says :

The unclean yavanas have become kings; sins are being committed everywhere; hence there hath been divine manifestation to blot out the evils of Kali. Nama says: the people, having found the yavanas unendurable, are singing the praises of God, for these are ever the means of redemption.

Eknath wrote :

Wicked kings began to rule, and they exploited their subjects like thieves. Themselves worse than Shudras, they converted people of all castes. Such being the condition, Brahmanas gave up studying scriptures; they became drunkards, served the ignominious, and fed themselves like dogs on the leavings of the Turks' tables.

In many of his abhangas, Tukaram sets forth a high and noble ideal of moral life. Sincerity, tolerance, forgiveness, humility, purity, compassion and service are stressed by him as aids to mukti. Above all, he emphasizes the unity and universality of life:

Through God the whole world is related to us; when a rope is stretched, every fibre is tense. The world is not worthless or an object of scorn; see how each life is blended with the life of all. The joy and grief of others affect us, as our joy and grief affect them. Tuka says, when this pure principle dwells within the heart, the outward man is radiant with delight.

It is no wonder that Tukaram made a profound impression on Shivaji, who used to attend the kirtans of this great saint. However, tradition asserts that Tukaram directed Shivaji to Ramdas.

Ramdas was a prophet of activism. He believed in and preached social and political action. In his *Dasbodh* the religious quest is integrated with various arts and sciences of life. He

founded 800 maths with akhadas and with the images of Sri Rama and Hanumant. In a letter addressed to Shivaji, Ramdas gives a poignant picture of the society and gives a call for concerted efforts to throw away the oppressive yoke of the Mughal rule:

Places of pilgrimage have been destroyed and homes of Brahmins desecrated; the whole earth is agitated; Dharma is gone. Therefore, the Marathas should be mobilised; Maharashtra Dharma should be propagated. The people should be rallied and filled with a singleness of purpose; sparing no effort, we should crash upon the mlenchhas.

It is also necessary to note that Ramdas advocated moderation. He declared that the wise should never be fanatical. Ramdas transformed the sahishnu attitude of the bhakti movement into the jayishnu attitude of the defenders of religion.

It is not necessary to examine here the controversy over the nature of the relationship of Shivaji to Ramdas. It is enough to note that the teachings of Ramdas deeply influenced Shivaji, so much so that he dedicated his kingdom to the great saint. More than that, the teachings of Ramdas gave the people a correct idea of the great mission of Shivaji. This was a great help to the builders of the new nation. The contribution of this bhakti movement towards the foundation of Swarajya has been succinctly put by S. R. Sharma :

In terms of Maratha history, we might describe Shivaji as a combination of Hanuman and Sri Ramachandra in the eyes of the masses. The emotional mysticism of Tukaram and the intellectual pragmatism of Ramdas must have been of considerable assistance to Shivaji in building up his great movement. He was certainly not writing on a blank page of history. The entire galaxy of saints had as much to do with the creation of a new Maratha Society as Shivaji. The psychological and moral foundations had been well laid before Shivaji's military and political genius laid the coping stone. Maratha Swarajya of the 17th century was not the work of a single man, howsoever gifted. It was a mansion built by several hands, directed by several brains.⁴

4. S. R. Sharma, *The Founding of Maratha Freedom*, Orient Longman, 1964, p. 128.

More intimately, Shivaji was influenced by the teachings of his mother, his tutor and other learned scholars who were sent by Shahaji to train and prepare his illustrious son for the great mission of building up swarajya. Shivaji's determination to establish an independent kingdom was given strength and substance by all these elders who stood by him throughout his career. Shivaji's letters, seals, titles and the very nature of his administration, all breathe the spirit of the ancient Ramarajya or Dharmarajya. His one great aspiration was to liberate the people from the oppressive rule of the Muslims. G. S. Sardesai quotes a passage from the writing of the court-historian, Sabhasad:

Why remain content with the gifts conferred by foreigners or with our paternal acquisition only? We are Hindus: this whole country is ours, and yet it is occupied and held by the Muslims. They desecrate our temples, break our idols, plunder our wealth, convert our countrymen forcibly to their religion, kill cows openly; we will suffer this treatment no more. We possess strength in our arms. Let us draw the sword in defence of our sacred religion, liberate our native country and acquire new lands and wealth by our own effort. We are as brave and capable as our ancestors of yore. If we undertake this sacred task, God will surely help us. All human efforts are so helped. There is no such thing as good luck or ill-luck. We are the captains of our soil and the makers of our freedom.⁵

Sardesai thinks that this passage gives expression to Shivaji's sentiments. But what is more certain is that this passage suggests how the contemporary observers interpreted Shivaji's mission. There is no doubt that Shivaji aspired to get rid of the Muslim rule and establish an independent polity which could ensure the people of the safety and security of their religion and culture. His ideal naturally was the ancient dharmarajya securely founded on the principle of samanvaya. There is ample evidence to show that Shivaji strove hard to establish a just rule, a rule based on the instruction of the shastras, traditions and opinions of the wise (shishta). The culmination of this endeavour was

5. G. S. Sardesai, *New History of the Marathas*, Vol. I, Phoenix Publications, Bombay, 1971, p. 103.

the grand coronation which gave formal recognition to the swarajya and defined its ideals and obligations in clear terms.

The tercentenary of the Coronation in 1974 naturally created considerable interest in the people of India about Maratha history in general and Shivaji and his coronation in particular. Therefore, I do not wish to discuss it in detail. However, it is necessary for my study to point out that coronation enjoys the most prestigious position in the Hindu tradition. One becomes a ruler only after coronation; otherwise one remains a military adventurer, however strong, just and humane one might be. Coronation invests in one the spiritual and political power to rule, protect and conquer. Shivaji was, before the coronation, an established ruler with an organised machinery of administration; he had the title Raja, his own flag, his own seal; he was a sovereign both *de facto* and *de jure* in his own territory. In his age, the recognition accorded to him by the Mughal emperor was sufficient to make him the *de jure* ruler. But that did not make him an accredited monarch according to the shastras of the faith which he shared with his own people. Shivaji ardently desired to be such an accredited monarch and therefore he decided to undergo this very cumbersome and expensive Vedic ritual.

The coronation secured for Shivaji the approval of the people, invested in him the powers of the guardian-deities, and at the same time bound him by oath to the rule of dharma. It is significant to note that Shivaji did not acquire more powers by the coronation; on the contrary his absolutism was chastened into a monarchy obliged to rule according to the sacred law of the land. He could levy taxes, administer justice and carry on the military campaigns only according to Law and not according to his whims and fancies. He could never be arbitrary (स्ववशो न कदाचन). Malhar Ramrao Chitnis in his *Shiva Chhatrapatichen Charitra* mentions that Shivaji took an oath (pratijna) at the coronation to restore the world which had been overrun by the yavanas (yavanakranta) and re-establish the Hindu dharma and to govern in accordance with the dharmashastras as befits a descendant of the ancient Sesodia line. That Shivaji willingly accepted the limitations on his sovereignty made him worthy of universal respect. The coronation assured Shivaji a place in the galaxy of the great monarchs of yore and inaugurated a new epoch in

the history of our country.

Thus, Shivaji's heritage, the spirit of the age, the influence of his mother and tutors, his own observations, the impact of Ramdas, all these moulded Shivaji's personality. His ideal was the ancient dharmarajya. Shivaji became, as Nehru points out, the symbol of a resurgent Hindu nationalism, drawing inspiration from the old classics, courageous and possessing high qualities of leadership. We have to assess and appreciate Shivaji's achievements in this light.

Long before the coronation, however, Shivaji had made the ideals of the dharmarajya his own. They were reiterated at the time of the coronation and again proclaimed in a document dated 28th January 1677, which S. R. Sharma terms as the possible Magna Carta of Maratha Swarajya :

This document recounts the circumstances of Shivaji's coronation in accordance with ascertained sacred laws for the protection of all Hindu religious and social traditions. It promises to render the most speedy and impartial justice to all who should invoke Shivaji's dispensation following established traditions, scriptures and public opinion and calls upon people of all communities to act with one accord and cooperate with the government in defeating the yavanas coming from the north.

This document reveals the spirit of Shivaji's administration. It shows that he was not a mere empire-builder adding territory to territory. It proves that Shivaji was a man with a mission who drew his inspiration from history, from the classics, from the society and culture around him, from Ramdas and the saints of Maharashtra, and more constantly from his mother Jijabai as an embodiment of all these.⁶

Now, what were the ideals of dharmarajya adopted by Shivaji for his swarajya? The dharmarajya aimed at establishing a society based on dharma, the principle that holds people together. In other words, the ideal of the state was to promote harmony among all people by protecting their life, property, rights and duties. The ruler was thus a symbol of harmony. He was to protect the subjects, promote their welfare, and administer justice,

6. S. R. Sharma, *op. cit.*, p. 198.

punish the wicked and in general create conditions necessary for progress. The conditions of an ideal state are summed up thus:

न मे स्तेनो जनपदे न कदर्यो न मद्यपो ।

नानाहितानिर्नाविद्वान् न स्वैरी स्वैरिणी कुतः ॥

(In my kingdom there is no thief, no miser, no drunkard, no man without a sacrificial fire, no ignorant person, no adulterer, and where is the adulteress?—*Chhandogya Upanishad*, V. 11·5).

The state must create such conditions that the people can live fearlessly as sons move about freely in their father's house. The oft-repeated benediction reflects the aspirations of the people :

स्वस्ति प्रजाभ्यः परिपालयताम् । न्यायेन मार्गेण महीं महीषाः ।

गोद्भ्राह्मणेभ्यः शुभमस्तु नित्यम् । लोकाः समस्ताः सुखिनो भवन्तु ॥

(May there be good for the subjects ! May the rulers rule the land by the path of justice! May there always be good for the cows and the brahmanas! May all people be happy!).

Kingship in this context could be an institution of service and not of power. Bhishmacharya defines the rajadharma thus:

Sacrifice of the self, kindness towards all beings, understanding and protecting all people, redress of the aggrieved and rescue of the oppressed—these constitute the dharma of rulers.

The ruler was thus expected to identify himself with the subjects. The happiness of the subjects was to be his guiding motto. He had no other interests. What was liked by the people was to be the desire of the ruler. A ruler's highest aspiration was the greatest happiness of his subjects. All ancient Indian thinkers thus emphasize the obligations of the ruler to society. Society indeed was higher than the state. The function of the state was to maintain and protect the social order with all its values, institutions and traditions. Individuals and groups were to be given opportunities for performing their duties without let or hindrance. Erring individuals were to be punished, but according to law. Thus, the state and monarchy were endowed with powers because they were to perform the necessary functions. The very nature of the kingdom as conceived and practised throughout long centuries precludes all possibility of despotism.

The state or kingdom, according to Indian tradition, is a corporate entity with seven limbs or elements: swami, amatya, kosh, bala, durga, janapada and mitra. I will briefly discuss the nature and significance of some of these, with particular reference to their place in swarajya. Fortunately we have a comprehensive study of Shivaji's polity in the *Ajnapatra ani Rajaniti* of Ramchandrapant Amatya. This great treatise not only summarises the traditional thought and practices but also deals with several contemporary situations and innovations introduced by Shivaji.

The 'swami' or the ruler was undoubtedly the most important limb of the state. He was responsible for everything good or bad that happened in the kingdom. It was his responsibility to pilot the ship of state smoothly and successfully. The ruler was to be a father to the fatherless and a son to the sonless. Therefore, ancient thinkers emphasized the king's personal character, his education and training, his austere life and his constant consultations with elders and ministers. The ruler had to perform a number of functions. A list of functions given by Ramchandrapant Amatya is interesting :

Regulation of the royal troops, forts, fortresses, cavalry, infantry; protection of the people; enquiring and looking into the prevalence of dharma and adharma; giving gifts at the proper time; payment of fixed salaries to the servants; collecting taxes from the people at the proper time; storing of acquired articles; keeping a regular check on income and expenditure; anticipating general, special, routine and unforeseen works by planning their execution beforehand according to their nature; punishing the guilty after determining the punishment in accordance with the shastras and taking into consideration what is just and what is unjust; planning of the means to ward off the dangers of foreign invasion; collecting information by sending spies to different countries; timely consideration of diplomatic ties—peace, war, neutrality towards the enemy; protection of the existing territories and acquisition of new ones; proper observance of delicate rules regarding female apartments; promoting further the prestige of respectable persons and keeping baser elements within limits; acquiring the blessings of gods and

god-fearing and pious brahmanas; destroying unsocial tendencies and promoting dharma, thereby gaining the shelter of the eternal world. These and such others are the duties of the king.

All students of Shivaji's career know that Shivaji exerted himself to the utmost to perform all these functions and more, most efficiently and with an eye on the welfare of his subjects. All sections of the subjects praised him without reservation. The Brahmins called him 'go-brahmana pratipalaka'; the Marathas felt elevated; the merchants, agriculturists and artisans breathed freely; the masses were liberated from the oppression of the yavana rule and hailed him as an avatar of Shiva. Perhaps the most wholesome appreciation came from Swami Ramdas:

Remember Shivaji! And count this life as grass! In this world and the next, rely on fame alone. Remember Shivaji! His form, his noble arms. Forget not also all his valiant deeds on earth.

It is significant that this praise is from one who ruthlessly censured all the hypocrisy and magic of the so-called saints. Ramdas Swami was a hard task-master, and that Shivaji could win such adoration from him is really gratifying. Even Aurangzeb had to admit Shivaji's magnanimity and outstanding ability. The unique character of Shivaji as a ruler will be brought out in the concluding remarks. Here it is sufficient to note that Shivaji achieved remarkable success in realizing the ideals of a dharma pravartaka.

Cleverly enough, Ramchandrapant gives the list of royal functions at the beginning of the section on ministers and points out that these functions can be performed only with the assistance of the ministers. But curiously, he does not make any reference to Shivaji's council of eight ministers. The minister in the *Ajnapatra* is no doubt an exalted functionary but only a sarkarkun. He is next to the ruler in authority, dignity and qualifications. Perhaps this arrangement was suggested by him for the smaller state of Kolhapur. Yet it is difficult to understand why the author, himself a member of Shivaji's council, did not refer to the most important limb of the Maratha State. It is certainly a serious lacuna in the otherwise comprehensive treatise. Perhaps some pages might have been irrevocably lost.

There is no doubt that Shivaji governed with the help of an Ashta Pradhan Mandal consisting of the Mukhya Pradhan (Peshwa), the Amatya (Majmuadar), the Sachiv (Shuru-navis), the Mantri (Waqia-navis), the Senapati (Sar-i-naubat), the Sumant (Dabir), the Panditrao (Sadr) and the Nyayadhish (Qazi-ul-quzat). There was also a secretariat attached to this Council. All these ministers and secretaries worked during the pleasure of the monarch. They had no constitutional or legal status except that granted by the ruler. Yet it is to be noted that Shivaji's ministers were of great eminence, senior in age, ripe with experience and unsurpassed in loyalty. As such, he usually listened to their advice. After all, the relation between the ruler and his ministers varies according to the relative strength of their personalities. What is quite relevant to our purpose is that Shivaji did have a council of ministers, as prescribed by traditional texts, to help him in governing the territory; and all of them shared his enthusiasm for bringing about the conditions necessary for the peace, progress and welfare of the subjects.

Next in the order of importance is the element of the kosha or the treasury. It is impossible to exaggerate the importance of a full treasury, a sound financial policy, a just system of taxes, revenue and customs and protection of trade and commerce, for the realization of the aims of a welfare state. That Shivaji took proper care of all these is well known. However, it is necessary to emphasize at least two aspects of Shivaji's financial administration.

Shivaji always exerted himself to keep his treasury full. And at the same time, he was very vigilant about expenditure. He did not like pomp or grandeur but lived in a very simple style. Orme writes :

His life was simple even to parsimony; his manners void of insolence or ostentation; as a sovereign most humane and solicitous for the well-being of his people the same principles of frugality and expense were observed in the municipal disbursements of his government.⁷

It is true that Shivaji paid his ministers, officers and servants of all cadres quite well. But he was careful to maintain a strict

7. Cited in V. B. Kulkarni, *Shivaji : the Portrait of a Patriot*, Orient Longman, 1963, pp. 218-19.

watch on expenditure, so as to avoid any kind of waste. Such a sense of judicious economy is quite relevant today. Our administrators can learn at least this one important lesson and much of the present-day suffering of the people could be reduced. It may be mentioned here that the Peshwas who refused to learn this lesson landed themselves and their people in serious trouble. Shivaji was a child of adversity and, appreciating the advice of the ancient thinkers, followed it faithfully, so that he was never handicapped in his career for want of money. Grant Duff, by no means an admirer of Shivaji, freely concedes:

We view his talents with admiration, and his genius with wonder. For a popular leader, his frugality was a remarkable feature in his character; and the richest plunder never made him deviate from the rules he had laid down for its appropriation.⁸

Shivaji could restrain himself thus because he was free from any kind of addiction and was a man of strong and resolute character. This is an aspect of the great man's personality that ought to be cherished by our leaders and administrators of today.

The second aspect of Shivaji's financial administration is the generosity with which he looked after the needy and patronised learning, religion and culture. It was the duty of the Panditrao to promote learning and dharma and to reward scholarship generously. One of the principles rigidly and constantly upheld and advocated by our ancient thinkers was that in a welfare state, a state aspiring to achieve progress, men devoted to the propagation of knowledge and enlightenment should never be compelled or even allowed to suffer destitution or seek patronage outside the state. On the contrary, the ruler of a dharma rajya should be able to attract scholars and wise men from the different regions. This again is one of the most relevant lessons for us today. If we take proper care of our men of genius and talent, the much-lamented brain-drain will be considerably reduced.

Shivaji's organization of the military (bala), especially the navy, the management of the forts (durga), and administration of the village communities (janapada), as well as his dealings with the other states (mitra or amitra) have been described fully

8. J. Grant Duff, *History of the Mahrattas*, Vol. I, edited by J. P. Guha, Associated Publishing House, New Delhi, 1971, p. 161.

by numerous authors, and I do not wish to add anything more except that in all these cases Shivaji followed the instructions of the ancient texts; of course, with suitable modifications necessitated by changing situations.

To sum up, Shivaji's Swarajya was the dharmarajya well-organised with saptanga, all the seven limbs functioning efficiently and harmoniously towards the realization of the ideal of the maximum welfare of the subjects. Great historians and scholars have been full of praise and admiration for Shivaji's success as a conqueror, ruler, leader and administrator. Jadunath Sarkar's oft-quoted estimate of Shivaji is:

Shivaji has proved by his example that the Hindu race can build a nation, found a state, defeat enemies; they can conduct their own defence; they can protect and promote literature and art, commerce and industry; they can maintain navies and ocean-trading fleets of their own and conduct naval battles on equal terms with foreigners. He taught the modern Hindus to rise to the full stature of their growth.⁹

But more eloquent and imbued with a pardonable sense of achievement is Shivaji's own report communicated to his guru, Swami Ramdas :

Obeisance to my noble Teacher (Ramdas), the father of all, the abode of bliss. Shivaji, who is merely as dust on his Master's feet, places his head on the feet of his Master, and submits: I was greatly obliged to have been favoured by your supreme instruction, and to have been told that my religious duty consists in conquest, in the establishment of Dharma, in the service of God and the Brahmans, in the amelioration of my subjects, and in their protection and succour. I have been advised that therein is spiritual satisfaction for me. You were also pleased to declare that whatever I should earnestly desire would be fulfilled. Consequently, through your grace, I have accomplished the destruction of the Turks and built at great expense fastnesses for the protection and perpetuation of my kingdom. Whatever kingdom I have acquired I have placed at your feet and dedicated myself to your service. I desired to enjoy

9. J. N. Sarkar, *Shivaji and His Times*, Orient Longman, 1973,
p. 389.

your close company, for which I built the temple at Chaphal and arranged for its upkeep and worship.

Now, by way of conclusion I would like to say a few words about Shivaji's unique role in history. In the life and achievements of every great man there are discernible two distinct traits : one topical and regional and the other eternal and universal. Shivaji's conquests, administration of Swarajya and humanitarian measures were of the first category. But his profound and burning patriotism, his passionate love of religion and culture and above all, his valiant but wise efforts to bring about harmony among the people of the two major communities as well as among the people of different castes of his own community belong to the category of the universal and the eternal. They have made a lasting impact on the course of our history and culture. Shivaji's life and achievements have been a perennial source of inspiration through Raja Chhatrasal, the Rani of Jhansi, Nana-saheb, Tatya Tope, Kumvarsinha, the revolutionaries of our freedom movement both in the North and South, the leaders and prophets of the greatness of Lokmanya Tilak, Aurobindo, Lala Lajpat Rai, Subhash Chandra Bose, Bipinchandra Pal and a thousand other soldiers of freedom as well as through eminent poets like Rabindranath Tagore, Sarojini Naidu, Subrahmany Bharati and writers like Hari Narayan Apte and Venkatesh Tirako Kulkarni Galaganatha.

Perhaps most relevant to our times and problems is Shivaji's endeavour to establish harmony between the Muslims and Hindus, and among the people of different castes. Shivaji demonstrated great respect for Islam. He revered the Muslim saints and the Holy Koran and built mosques for the Muslim soldiers in his employment. He thus showed great tolerance and trusted the Muslim officers of Swarajya. Here what is noteworthy is that one can be tolerant and magnanimous only when one is strong. The move for harmony could be initiated only from a position of strength. This is the lesson we have to learn.

The second aspect of social harmony achieved by Shivaji is quite enlightening. It is claimed that Shivaji's employment of men of different castes was to effect a sort of check by them on each other. However, this interpretation is unfair to the great ruler who was also a visionary. Shivaji employed men of different

castes because he wanted them to learn to work and live in complete harmony and co-operation. Shivaji never assumed that men of different castes were rivals or jealous of each other.

Today we are faced with this problem. I hope that our leaders, scholars and rulers will learn a lesson from the great founder of Swarajya and spare no efforts to bring about complete harmony, not only between the principal religions and regional groups, but also among the citizens of different castes. Let us pray to that great Maker of History to lead us along the right path so that we can live and work in peace.

अने नय सुपथा राये अस्मान् विश्वानि देव वयुनानि विद्वान् ।
युग्मोद्यस्मज्जुहुराणमेनो भूयिष्ठां ते नमउर्वित विद्येम ॥

Agni Deva who knowest all the ways,
Lead us by the right path to felicity,
Remove from us the sin that leads astray;
We bring thee the most ample adoration.

(*Rigveda* I. 189.1)

यथेमां चाचं कल्याणीम् । आवदानि जनेभ्यः ।
ब्रह्मराजन्याभ्याम् । शूद्राय चार्याय च स्वाय चारणाय च ॥

So that I may speak the blissful word
To the masses of the people;
To the Brahmana and the Rajanya;
To the Sudra and the Vaisya;
To our own men and to the foreigner.

(*Yajurveda* Vaj. XXVI. 2)

The Place of Swarajya in Indian History

M. S. AGASKAR

During the 15th and 16th centuries there was a religious, social and literary revival in India, which was especially notable in the Deccan. This revival was chiefly the work of saints who belonged to different castes and classes; but it was not orthodox or ritualistic in character. Rather, it embodied the cult of Bhakti, which recognised no distinctions based on birth, caste or class, and advocated true devotion to God and love for one's fellow-beings in preference to meaningless rites and rituals.¹

This socio-religious movement brought in its wake the pulsations of a political awakening which prepared the Marathas to participate actively in the mission of Shivaji, and finally culminated in the establishment of Hindavi Swarajya. In order to arrive at a proper assessment of the place of this Swarajya in Indian history, I propose to review briefly :

1. The origin, growth and extent of the Swarajya.
2. Its socio-administrative organisation.
3. The new principles and trends it introduced.
4. Its impact on the course of Indian history.

Shivaji carved out his first compact possessions from the tract between Chakan and the Nira. In his early career, he was always thrown on his own resources and this enabled him to develop not only self-reliance but also a capacity to take the initiative without any sense of subordination or responsibility to a higher authority. Like Sher Shah who organised the turbulent Afghans under his banner, Shivaji too organised the Marathas who resembled the Afghans "in their combination of courage, cleverness and power of endurance, in their ability to plan and execute surprises and night attacks, and in their

1. M. G. Ranade, *Rise of the Maratha Power*, University of Bombay, 1961, p. 5.

skill at extricating themselves from a tight corner or varying their tactics according to the changing phases of a battle, without waiting for guidance from a superior.”² But Shivaji’s master-mind was seen not only in his military exploits, but also in his organisation of a socio-political order which alone could repulse the Mughals even after his death. His Swarajya was a far-stretching but well-knit kingdom with a body of competent administrators and an army which was ever in readiness to crush the enemy. It guaranteed security to life and property, and social peace for which the common people of Maharashtra had longed in vain during the protracted conflicts of the Deccan Sultanates in the preceding century. The need of the hour was the foundation of a state based on principles of justice, and it was Shivaji who responded to the clarion call and satisfied this need.

Before Shivaji came on the scene, the Maratha Deshmukhs were ready to die for their watans, but they never cared for the welfare of their subjects. There was utter lawlessness all around. In such a situation, guided by Dadaji Kondadev, Shivaji played the role of an ‘honest judge and strong magistrate’. Sarkar observes :

As the fame of his justice, firmness, and stand for the weak was noised abroad from village to village in Maharashtra more and more looked up to him as their protector and longed to come under his rule. His dominion spread first of all through the conquest of hearts, which the honest and strong administrator alone can achieve among a simple rustic population. And then came his appeal to their individual ambition by providing them with undreamt of opportunities of advancement from the status of common soldiers to that of barons under his banners. In the end, the corporate spirit of the Marathas was kindled and sublimated; they gloried in the evident fact that they were a nation at last rousing itself like a strong man after a long and painful sleep under Muslim tyranny or like an “eagle mewing its mighty youth”. Shivaji succeeded because he was his people’s hero as king.³

2. J. N. Sarkar, *Shivaji and His Times*, Orient Longman, 1973, pp. 7-8.
 3. J. N. Sarkar, *op.cit.*, p.30.

Shivaji did not aim at the establishment of an all-India empire under his direct control. All that he wanted to achieve was "to secure the freedom of his own people and to unite them into one nation, powerful for self-defence and for self-assertion also; the extinction of all other powers was not contemplated by him".⁴ In fact, he entered into friendly relations with the southern kingdoms of Golkonda, Bednore and even Bijapur and permitted his brother Venkoji to have a jagir all to himself south of the Kolerun. Shivaji made a clear distinction between Swarajya (i. e., territory directly governed by him) and Moglai (i. e., territory governed by Muslim kings outside his Swarajya) and contented himself with the levy of only Chouth and Sardesh-mukhi from the Mughal dominions.

Justice Ranade has given the following details about the extent of Shivaji's kingdom, which appear to have been based on the *Chitnis Bakhar*, though there are some variations in the number of forts mentioned by Ranade :

Besides his ancestral jahagir about Poona, there was (1) Prant Maval—corresponding with the Maval, Saswad, Junnar, and Khed Talukas of the present day, and guarded by eighteen great hill forts; (2) the Prants of Wai, Satara, and Karad—corresponding with the western portions of the present Satara District, guarded by fifteen forts; (3) Prant Panhala—corresponding with the western parts of Kolhapur, with thirteen hill forts; (4) Prant South Konkan—corresponding with Ratnagiri, with fifty-eight hill forts and sea-fortresses; (5) Prant Thana—corresponding to North Konkan District with twelve forts ; (6) and (7) Prants Trimbak and Baglan—corresponding with western parts of Nasik, with sixty-two hill forts. The territories occupied by the military garrisons were: (8) Prant Wanagad—corresponding with the southern parts of Dharwar district, with twenty-two forts; (9), (10) and (11) Prants Bednore, Kolhar and Shrirangapatan corresponding with the modern Mysore, with eighteen forts; (12) Prant Karnatik—being the ceded districts in the Madras Presidency south of the Krishna, with eighteen forts; (13) Prant

4. M. G. Ranade, *op.cit.*, p.63.

Vellore—modern Arcot district, with twenty-five forts and
(14) Prant Tanjore, with six forts.⁵

While Shivaji retained with himself the ultimate power of government in the Swarajya, he distributed the detailed work of administration among a Council of Eight Ministers as mentioned below :

(1) The Mukhya Pradhan or Peshwa (Prime Minister) generally looked after the welfare of the state, acted for the King in the latter's absence and kept peace among the other officers, promoting harmony in administration. All Royal letters and charters bore his seal below the King's.

(2) The Amatya or Majmuadar (Auditor General) checked the accounts of public income and expenditure and reported them to the king. He counter-signed all statements of accounts of the kingdom as a whole and also of particular districts.

(3) The Mantri or Waqia-navis (Chronicler) had to maintain a daily record of the king's doings and court incidents, and to keep a watch over the king's invitation-lists, meals, companions etc., so as to guard against murder plots.

(4) The Sachiv or Shuru-navis (Superintendent) saw to it that all royal letters were drafted in the proper style and revised where necessary. At the head of charters, he wrote the words 'shuru shud' meaning 'Here begins'. He had also to check the accounts of the Mahals and Parganas.

(5) The Sumant or Dabir (Foreign Secretary) advised the King on relations with foreign states, waging of war and declaration of peace. He had to keep intelligence about other countries, receive and dismiss foreign envoys, and maintain the dignity of the state abroad.

(6) The Senapati or Sar-i-naubat (Commander-in-Chief) was the head of the armed forces.

(7) The Panditrao or Sadr (Ecclesiastical Head) was the judge of canon law and censor of public morals. He decided theological questions and caste disputes, fixed dates

5. M. G. Ranade, *op.cit.*, p.64.

for religious ceremonies, punished impiety and heresy and ordered penances. He also functioned as Danadhyaksha or Muhatasib (Royal Almoner) and honoured and rewarded learned Brahmans on behalf of the King.

(8) Nyayadhisth or Qazi-ul-quzat (Chief Justice) tried civil and criminal cases according to Hindu Law and endorsed all judicial decisions, especially about rights to land, village headmanship, etc.⁶

Barring the last two, all these Ministers were also required to command armies and go out on expeditions. No post was hereditary, and jagirs were not granted for service to the state.

Shivaji changed his Peshwa once and his Senapati three times. All royal letters, charters and treaties had to bear the seals of the King and the Peshwa and the endorsement of the next four Ministers.

The basic unit of Shivaji's government was the hill fort with the territory controlled by it. These forts were the saviours of the Swarajya in its days of difficulty; and Shivaji spared no money or efforts in repairing, garrisoning and provisioning them. He also constructed a number of new forts. Every fort was placed under three officers of equal status, the Havaldar, the Sabnis and the Sar-i-naubat, who were required to act jointly. While the Havaldar and the Sar-i-naubat belonged to the Maratha caste, the Sabnis was selected from amongst the Brahmans. A Kayastha officer, known as Karkhanah-navis, was given charge of the stores and provisions in the fort and he had to maintain accounts of the incomings and expenditure. The walls of the bigger forts were demarcated into five or six sections, each of which was guarded by a Tat-Sar-i-naubat. Men of the Parwari and Ramoshi castes were employed to keep a watch on the environs of each fort. Shivaji gave minute written instructions about how each fort was to be adequately stocked with provisions, building materials and munitions, and how the watch and ward duties were to be performed. These instructions were strictly enforced. Thus, the Havaldar himself had to lock the gates at sunset, carry the keys with him, sleep with them under his pillow and open the gates at sunrise.

6. J. N. Sarkar, *op.cit.*, pp. 361-62.

Shivaji's army consisted of about a lakh of soldiers. All of them—whether musketeers, spearmen, archers or swordsmen—were enlisted only after a careful personal inspection by Shivaji himself and after taking security for every new soldier from those already in service. During the rainy season, the troops lived in cantonments in the home territory. Their huts were thatched with grass; and grain, fodder and medicines were kept in stock. On Dassara day, a grand durbar was held, when men, horses and equipment were subjected to a minute scrutiny. Thereafter the army set out on its campaign of conquest. At the time of its departure, a list was made of all the property that every man, high or low, carried with himself, and on return he was required to give up whatever he possessed over and above his original list. No woman, female slave or dancing girl was allowed to accompany the army. The soldiers were required to behave themselves during the campaigns and molestation of women, children, Brahmans, husbandmen and cows was forbidden even during war. Punishment for breach of discipline was swift and exemplary.

Turning next to the revenue administration of the Swarajya, we find that the land in every province was measured and the area calculated in Chavars. An estimate was made of the expected produce of each bigha, three parts of it were left to the peasant and two parts taken by the state. The revenue was collected in kind at harvest time. New ryots who came to settle were given money for seeds and cattle and the amount was recovered in two or four annual instalments.

The Swarajya was divided into Prants, Subhas and Mahals. The average revenue of a Mahal ranged from three-fourths of a lakh to a lakh and a quarter. Two or three Mahals made a Subha or a district. Shivaji did not continue the old Mughal system of leaving the revenue management solely in the hands of Village Patils. The work of management was carried on directly by the Subhedars or Mahalkaris for the Subha or the Mahal, while every group of two or three villages was managed by a Kamavisdar who made direct collection of revenue.

Sabhasad, a contemporary of Shivaji, tells us :

In the Nizamshahi, Adilshahi and Mughal territories annexed, the ryots had formerly been subject to Patils, Kulkarnis and

Deshmukhs, who used to do the collection work and pay what they pleased to the state—sometimes only 200 or 300 hons for a village yielding 2000 hons as revenue. These Mirasdars, thus growing wealthy, built forts, enlisted troops and became powerful. They never waited upon the revenue officer of the Government, and used to show fight if he urged that the village could pay more to the state. This class had become unruly and seized the country. But Shivaji dismantled their castles, garrisoned the strong places with his own troops and took away all power from the Mirasdars. Formerly they used to take whatever they liked from the ryots. This was now stopped. Their dues were fixed after calculating the exact revenue of the village and they were forbidden to build castles.⁷

Shivaji thus sought to do away with this class of middle-men and to bring his government into direct relations with the cultivators. He also realised the dangers of conferring gifts of land for military or other services rendered to his government. The lands cultivated by the Sar-i-naubats, Majmuadars, Karkuns and officers in the King's personal service were subject to assessment like the fields of the ryots, and the revenue amount due was deducted from their pay. They received the balance of their salary from the treasury of the capital or the district. The men serving in the army, the militia or the forts were also paid either by assignments of revenue or by cash from the treasury, and proprietary or mokasa rights over an entire village were not given to them.

The religious policy of the Swarajya stood in marked contrast with that of the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb, who had brought about a deliberate reversal of the policy of tolerance adopted by his predecessors towards their non-Muslim subjects. Aurangzeb was a fanatical believer in the orthodox interpretation of Islamic theology, according to which :

The highest duty of the true believer is to make exertion (jihad) in the path of God by waging war against infidel lands (dar-ul-harb) till they became part of the realm of Islam (dar-ul-Islam). After conquest, the entire infidel

7. Cited in J. N. Sarkar, *op. cit.*, p. 367

population became theoretically reduced to the status of slaves of the conquering army.

A non-Muslim, therefore, cannot be a citizen of the state; he is a member of a depressed class; his status is a modified form of slavery. He lives under a contract (zimma) with the state for the life and property that are grudgingly spared to him by the Commander of the Faithful; he must undergo political and social disabilities and pay commutation money (jaziya). He must show by humility of dress and behaviour that he belongs to a subject class. No non-Muslim (zimmi) can wear fine dresses, ride on horseback or carry arms; he must behave respectfully and submissively to every member of the dominant sect. The zimmi is under certain legal disabilities with regard to testimony in law courts, protection under criminal law, and marriage. The state, as the other party in the contract (zimma), guarantees to him security of life and property and a modified protection in the exercise of religion. He cannot erect new temples, and has to avoid any offensive publicity in the exercise of his faith.⁸

In a charter granted to the priests of Benares in the very first year of his reign, Aurangzeb had declared that his religion forbade him to allow the building of new temples but did not enjoin the destruction of old ones. But this was before his throne was secure, and soon he ceased to respect the distinction earlier made by him. His iconoclastic zeal burst forth in full force on 9th April 1669, when he issued a general order to the governors of all provinces "to demolish all the schools and temples of the infidels and to put down their religious teaching and practices". Officers were sent to every Pargana to demolish local temples, and the governor had to send a report of the execution of the order under the seal of the Qazi and attested by pious sheikhs of the locality. Censors of public morals (Muhatasibs) were appointed to every subdivision and city, and it was their normal duty to go round and destroy Hindu temples within their jurisdiction. So large was the number of official temple-demolishers that a Darogha had to be appointed over

8. J. N. Sarkar, *History of Aurangzeb*, Vol. III, M. C. Sarkar & Sons, Calcutta, 1928, pp. 249-53.

them to guide and coordinate their activities. Besides numberless shrines throughout the empire, all the most famous Hindu places of worship now suffered destruction—the temples of Somnath at Patan, Vishvanath at Benares and Keshav Dev at Mathura. Even the loyal State of Jaipur did not escape, 66 temples being demolished in the capital city of Ambar. In Udaipur and Chitor alone, in two months 239 temples suffered ruin by Aurangzeb's order. The work of destruction was often accompanied by wanton desecration, such as the slaughtering of cows in the sanctuary and causing the idols to be trodden down in public squares.

The abwabs or illegal exactions levied during the Mughal period were also a prolific source of oppression to the people. These included duties on the local sale of produce, fees on sale of immovable property, perquisites exacted by officials for their own benefit, as well as fees and commissions levied on behalf of the state on almost every conceivable occasion, licence tax for plying certain trades and forced subscriptions.⁹ There were special imposts on Hindus, including for instance a tax of Rs. 6.25 per pilgrim for bathing in the sacred waters at Allahabad, and a fee charged for carrying the bones of dead Hindus to throw them into the Ganga. As a tax was also levied on the father for the birth of a male child, it could truly be said that under the Mughals, illegal cesses pursued a man from birth to death.

"In this age of renewed persecution," says Sarkar, "Shivaji appeared as the star of a new hope for the Hindu World".¹⁰ His spirited letter of protest to Aurangzeb on the reimposition of jaziya is justly famous. He wrote:

In strict justice, the jaziya is not at all lawful. If you imagine piety to consist in oppressing and terrorising the Hindus, you ought first to levy the tax upon Rajsingh who is the head of the Hindus. But to oppress ants and flies, is neither valour nor spirit. If you believe in the Koran, God is the Lord of all men and not of the Muhammedans only. Islam and Hinduism are only different pigments

9. J. N. Sarkar, *Mughal Administration*, Orient Longman, 1972, p. 60.

10. J. N. Sarkar, *Shivaji and His Times*, p. 371.

used by the Divine Painter to picture the human species. To show bigotry for any man's creed and practices is to alter the words of the Holy Book. Your officers neglect to tell you of the true state of things and cover a blazing fire with straw".¹¹

Although Shivaji considered it his mission to defend the Hindu religion and way of life against the onslaught of the Mughals, he was not animated by any hatred towards Muslims. Full religious liberty for all was his ideal as well as practice in the Swarajya. He respected the holy places of all religions even during his raids and made endowments not only for Hindu temples, but also for mosques as well as tombs of Muslim saints. Just as he granted pensions to Brahman scholars versed in the Vedas, he built hermitages and provided subsistence for the holy men of Islam, notably Baba Yaqut of Kelshi in Ratnagiri district. He also employed a number of Muslims in positions of trust and responsibility, and they served him with great zeal and devotion.

About the patronage extended to learning in the Swarajya, the Bakhars tell us :

The lost Vedic studies were revived by Shivaji. One maund of rice was annually presented to a Brahman who had mastered one of the Books of the Vedas: two maunds to a master of two Books, and so on. Every year the Panditrao used to examine the scholars in the month of Shravan and increase or decrease their stipends according to their progress in study. Foreign Pandits received presents in goods, local scholars in food. Famous scholars were assembled, honoured and given money rewards. No Brahman had occasion to go to other kingdoms to beg.¹²

As Justice Ranade observes in his *Rise of the Maratha Power*, the system of civil government established by Shivaji was distinguished from those which preceded it or succeeded it in several important respects :

Firstly—In the great importance he attached to the hill forts,

11. Cited in G. S. Sardesai, *New History of the Marathas*, Vol. I, Phoenix Publications, Bombay, 1971, p. 260.

12. Cited in J. N. Sarkar, *Shivaji and His Times*, op. cit., p. 368.

which were virtually the starting unit of his system of government.

Secondly—In his discouragement of the hereditary system of transmitting high offices in one and the same family.

Thirdly—In his refusal to grant Jahagir assignments of land for the support of Civil and Military Officers.

Fourthly—In the establishment of a direct system of revenue management, without the intervention of district or village zamindars.

Fifthly—In the disallowance of the farming system.

Sixthly—In the establishment of a Council of Ministers with their proper work allotted to them, and each directly responsible to the King-in-Council.

Seventhly—In the subordination of the Military to the Civil element in the administration.

Eighthly—In the intermixture of Brahmans, Prabhus and Marathas in all offices, high and low, so as to keep check upon one another.¹³

The men who occupied the seats of power in later Maratha history departed from the sound system laid down by Shivaji, either because they did not appreciate the wisdom of his plans or else because they succumbed to the needs of expediency and present convenience. This encouraged the growth of centrifugal forces in the Swarajya, which broke up its organised unity and ultimately led to its dismemberment and dissolution.

Shivaji had set up the Council of Eight Ministers as a repository of outstanding talent for continuous aid and advice to the monarch. But in the reign of Shahu, this system gradually fell into disuse, as the Peshwa alone started managing the affairs of state and functioned as his own general, his own finance minister and foreign minister too. This system of personal rule by a single minister deprived the government of the multi-pronged support it would have received from the institutional arrangements devised by Shivaji.

With the Peshwaship becoming hereditary, all other high offices of State also became hereditary in the later Maratha

13. M. G. Ranade, *op. cit.*, p. 71-72.

period. But natural capacity and talent are not always inherited; and inefficient and unworthy persons occupying important positions became a drag on government. Really competent persons had to resort to force and craft in order to climb to positions of power and this gave rise to an unhealthy rivalry and court intrigue.

Shivaji had tried to maintain a social balance between the different communities in his kingdom by equitably distributing among them the various offices of state according to their inherited aptitudes. The Peshwas tilted this balance in favour of Brahmins, which sowed the seeds of bickerings. The Prabhus ceased to occupy any important positions in the later Maratha period.

Shivaji had realised that the Jahagirdars were a source of weakness to the Central Power; and he therefore sought to defeudalise his state. This wise precaution was, however, thrown to the winds by his son Rajaram and grandson Shahu. Whatever may have been the justification for it, there is no doubt that the growth of Saranjams in later Maratha history ultimately spelt the ruin of the Swarajya. The Gaikwads became the virtual rulers of Gujarat, the Bhonsales became supreme in Nagpur and Shinde, Holkar and Pawar had the north all to themselves. They resented any interference from the Central Power and soon became unamenable to its control. This hastened the process of disintegration of the Maratha State.

The salutary principles of government laid down by Shivaji were thus abandoned by his successors, and this was one of the major causes of the decline of Swarajya. Yet it cannot be denied that Shivaji and his Swarajya have had a significant impact on the course of our history. The intense love for our motherland and for our culture generated by Shivaji are powerful forces even today. His achievements inspired many a leader and soldier of our freedom movement. Indeed, Shivaji's ideals and virtues are an eternal source of inspiration and guidance. Let us pray that we will be wise enough to learn useful lessons from the fascinating story of his life and work.

